

No. 776.

AUGUST 13, 1920.

7 Cents

FAME ^{AND} FORTUNE WEEKLY.

STORIES OF BOYS THAT MAKE MONEY.



A LAD OF IRON NERVE
OR LITTLE JOE'S BIG BONANZA
AND OTHER STORIES By A SELF-MADE MAN

The door was suddenly blocked by several masked men, one of whom seized Little Joe and started to drag him into the ruins. The boy struggled desperately. Finding escape impossible, he flung the bag of gold toward Tom and Madge.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

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A LAD OF IRON NERVE

Or, LITTLE JOE'S BIG BONANZA

BY A SELF-MADE MAN

CHAPTER I.—Madge Mason and Others.

"It's no use of you following me about, Noah Wood. I won't have anything to say to you," said Pretty Madge Mason, to a surly-looking youth one year her senior.

"Why won't you?" asked Noah, in a disagreeable tone.

"Because I don't like you."

"Oh, you don't?"

"No, I don't," said the girl with some spirit.

"Ain't I good enough for you any more?"

"I don't want to talk about the matter."

"Well, I want to talk about it."

"Then talk to yourself. I'm going home."

"I'll go with you."

"I don't care for your company."

"Look here, Madge Mason, you haven't always treated me this way. Once we were pretty good friends."

"That was before I knew you as well as I do now."

"What do you mean by that?"

"Just what I said."

"You have known me for five years, ever since you came to this town with your uncle to live, and you treated me well enough till you got acquainted with that sawed-off lobster, Joe Hooker, and since then you've been trying to shake me for him."

"You're talking nonsense," said Madge, with a rosy flush.

"No, I ain't talking nonsense. I've got eyes and can see, I guess."

The girl made no reply.

"What's he, anyway? Nothing but a common printer," went on Noah with a sneer.

"A common printer!" flashed Madge, indignantly. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself to talk that way. I suppose you think a printer isn't as good as a carpenter, or any other skilled workman."

"Oh, he's only a bum printer. He ain't a skilled workman. He's just learning the business in the Record office, and a fellow who sets type there says he'll never amount to anything."

"You're jealous of him, Noah Wood, that's what you are, and I don't believe anybody ever told you that Joe wouldn't amount to anything. If he did he didn't tell you the truth. Joe Hooker is a smart boy. If you were half as smart you'd be lucky."

"Is that so?" snorted Noah. "If I didn't know more'n him I'd go and jump into the river."

"Then you'd better go and jump into the river, for you don't know a quarter as much as he does."

I don't wonder, either, because you're so lazy and shiftless that you won't take the trouble to learn anything. Why don't you help your father, and learn his business? My uncle says he's a first-class carpenter."

"Ho! What do you think I am? I'm going to learn to be a lawyer."

"A pretty lawyer you'd make. You haven't got education enough."

"Is that so? I've been at school as long as you, and you think you know a whole lot. Mr. Wrangle is going to take me into his office next week. He's one of the best lawyers in town. I won't have to take my coat off there, and roll up my sleeves to the elbow like Joe Hooker and other common laborers. A lawyer is a gentleman, and his clerks are gentlemen. They amount to something, and that's more than printers and carpenters ever do."

"I've said all I care to and more than I intended to you. After this I want you to attend to your own affairs and not annoy me with your undesirable attentions. I don't like you, and when I don't like a person I don't want to be bothered by them."

With those words Madge Mason turned and walked away, leaving Noah Wood looking after her as mad as a hornet. Madge was one of the prettiest and most spirited girls in the town of Corinth. She lived on the outskirts of the town, in a pretentious old mansion, standing on the banks of a tributary of the Missouri River, with her uncle, David Peck, a well-to-do retired steamboat captain. Everybody, so to speak, knew Captain Peck. He was short, stout, and somewhat baldheaded. His face and hands, from long exposure to the weather, were tanned the color of mahogany, and he sported a thick crop of aggressive-looking whiskers which made him appear very fierce, indeed, particularly when he was out of temper, which seemed to be his chronic condition.

He was a widower, and as Madge was the only relative he had, he was very fond of her. As she was beginning to bloom into young womanhood, the possibility of her falling in love with some young fellow, and leaving him alone in his old age, bothered him not a little; in fact it was the real cause of his temper being so sour. To protect himself against such a contingency, he took the very worst course, and that was to deny her the privilege of receiving male visitors, and to provide her with a maid who was instructed to report to him if she carried on any correspondence with boys or young men. The

maid, whose name was Kittie Drew, proved recreant to the trust which the captain reposed in her, for she soon grew to like her mistress a lot better than the master of the house, whom she regarded as an old ogre, whose whiskers she declared to be positively terrifying when he was angry. Whenever Madge went out, Kittie had orders to accompany her. Mistress and maid got on so well together that Madge was well pleased to have Kittie with her. Frequently Kittie took advantage of these outings to visit her mother at the other side of town, with Madge's permission, but the two girls always arranged a rendezvous where they met and returned to the "castle" together, so that Captain Peck, up to the present time, had no suspicion that his orders were not fully carried out.

Before her distasteful meeting with Noah Wood, Madge had called at the office of the tri-weekly Record and had a brief talk with Joe Hooker, who, owing to his somewhat abbreviated stature was facetiously called "Little Joe" by his associates. Joe didn't care for that, for he recollected that many of the greatest men of the world's history—Julius Caesar, Napoleon Bonaparte, Ulysses Grant, for instance—were men of small size. Madge liked Joe, and Joe was sweet on Madge. We may remark here that Joe's particular friend, Tom Bland, who had acquired the habit of declaring that everything that didn't jibe with his views would "end in a blow up," was sweet on Kittie Drew, Madge's sprightly and good looking maid.

Madge sympathized with Joe because he was an orphan and had to hustle for his living; while Joe sympathized with Madge because she was under the thumb of a crusty old guardian, quite overlooking the fact that the captain didn't mean to be hard on his niece, but was merely carrying out his ideas of what he thought was best for her own good. After leaving the Record office, and while on her way to the rendezvous where she expected to rejoin Kittie, who had gone to see her mother, she encountered Noah Wood.

CHAPTER II.—In the Job Room of the "Record."

While Madge was trying to rid herself of Noah's company, Little Joe was busily employed in the job room of the Record Publishing Co. He was a fast type-setter, and stood well in the good graces of the foreman of his room, who having taken a fancy to him was pushing him ahead as fast as possible, giving him every opportunity to make good as an all-around compositor. On the afternoon in question he was at the stone making corrections in a railroad time-table, with a small figure case in front of him. Tom Bland was a job press feeder, and had just run off 1,000 business cards on his press and was taking the form over to the trough to wash it. Another feeder, who was waiting for the pressman to finish making ready a job on his machine, taking advantage of the fact the foreman had gone into the next room to speak to a Mergenthaler operator, stuck out his foot. Dire results followed.

Tom stumbled over the obstruction in his path, threw out both hands to save himself, and as

the job form was in one of them, it collided with an eight-page book form standing ready to be lifted on a pony cylinder, and there was a crash—the big form going to pi and Tom rolling over on the floor; but managing to save his own form from participating in the general wreckage. The guilty youth, though startled by the damage he had unintentionally caused, had the wit to quickly draw back his foot and assume a very innocent look. The smash-up attracted general attention, and drew forth many grins from the typos and feeders, who, in such cases, seem to forget the sympathy due an unfortunate comrade. The foreman appeared with the quickness of a person on roller skates, and the first thing he saw was Tom picking himself up.

"Hello, what's happened?" he demanded.

"That eight-page form I was getting the 'pony' ready for has gone to pi," said the pressman.

As job room foremen are never known to swear or lose their temper under the most trying conditions, the ejaculation the boss of the room let out couldn't have been an oath, though it was hot enough to melt all the type in the office according to Little Joe, who heard it easily enough.

"Did you do that, Bland?" roared the foreman, his eyes snapping like live coals.

"Well I couldn't help it if I did," replied Tom, doggedly, well aware of the enormity of the offence.

"Couldn't help it!"

"No. I was carrying this form to the lye pot when that funny guy," pointing at the joker, "put out one of his flatboats and tripped me up."

"Don't you know any better than to butt into a live form, confound you?" said the foreman.

"Yes, but how was I to help it? I saved this form at any rate."

"That form be blessed! What does it amount to alongside the other job that had to be run off this afternoon? It's likely to be run off now, isn't it? When I report the matter in the office there'll be something doing I fancy."

"What are you jawing me for when I tell you that Duncan is to blame," growled Tom.

"Because this wouldn't have happened if you had not been so careless," said the foreman.

Then he turned to haul Duncan over the coals, but that lad had sneaked behind the double cylinder on which the paper was printed.

Not seeing the boy the foreman shouted for him. Duncan deemed it prudent to make his appearance.

"Why did you trip Bland up and make him pi that form?" asked the foreman.

"Me, sir? Bland is off his base. I didn't trip him up. He fell over his own feet and mistook them for mine," said Duncan.

"You and Bland will stay here to-night and not go home till you set up every type of that pi. And to-morrow night you will distribute," said the foreman.

"I guess not," muttered Tom, who heard the order plain enough. "I'm not to blame and I don't intend to be made a goat of. If Buckley wants to fire me he can do it, but I won't let him set on my neck. I can get a job at the Argus office."

The foreman then got the revised proof of the

destroyed form, and set four hands at work setting it up again. The foreman reported the disaster to one of the proprietors, and said that the delivery of the job would be delayed twenty-four hours unless the compositors worked overtime. As that would cost the office more money, and there was no great rush in the job room, he was told to get the work out in the regular hours.

Tom washed his form and shoved it into the job rack. He made up his mind to have it out with Duncan just the same. He knew he could whip the other feeder if he tried hard enough, and he intended to put it over for keeps.

Duncan had played him a low-down trick, and he wasn't going to stand for it. Besides, he and Joe had arranged to call on Madge and Kittie that night at the "castle," as they called the captain's fortified residence, and Joe had made the date when she called to see him that afternoon. There was only one way by which they could get into the grounds without having a strenuous discussion with the bulldog, and that was by taking a boat and rowing up to the northwest corner of the river wall, throwing a rope over one of the spikes, climbing up and then connecting with a rope ladder which the girls would let down from an unfurnished corner room which was known as the haunted chamber, though no ghost had been seen on the premises during the five years the captain had occupied the house. The rope ladder had been supplied by the boys, and they had used this private route on several occasions with success.

Tom knew Joe wouldn't keep the date without him, and if he had to stay and sort half that type out why the girls would be disappointed, and he could almost guess what Kittie would say about him. However, there seemed to be no help for it, and Tom started feeding his press in a grouchy frame of mind. The whistle blew at five and all hands knocked off work. Tom went up to the foreman.

"I suppose I can eat before I tackle that job," he said.

"Get back at half-past and sail in. The quicker you work the sooner you'll be through," said the foreman, shortly.

"I ain't a comp, so you can't expect me to stick it up so fast."

"It's only pi. You slap it up any way, leaving out the spaces and quads, but see that you keep the nicks up, so it can be distributed without trouble."

"All right. It's a shame though, for I wasn't to blame."

"You were half to blame. At any rate you've got to stand for your share. If you'd looked where you were falling the thing wouldn't have happened."

"I didn't have no time to look. I came near busting my brains out anyway," said Tom, and then he walked over to the trough.

Duncan was putting on his coat. Tom saw him, but he intended to wait until Duncan came back to get the pi. Joe came over to his friend.

"Say, Tom, I'm going to help you out. We'll eat at the beanery next door, and then I'll come back with you. It's twelve-point, and about a third of it is quads and spaces. We'll get your

share up in time for us to keep our date, though we'll be a little late; but the girls will be on the lookout for us."

"Thanks, Joe; you're a good fellow. 'I've got to put a few wallops over Duncan before we start in, or I wouldn't feel I had done justice to myself.'"

"Let him slide. He'll have to stay at the job three times as long as you. That will punish him, for he'll have only the watchman for company," said Joe.

It took some persuasion on Joe's part to make Tom forego his vengeance, but he finally consented to do so. The boys hurried through their meal and hustled back to the office. It was summer time so they had a couple of hours of daylight before them before it would be necessary to light up the stone on which lay the two big bunches of pi.

"Gee!" exclaimed Joe, "that looks like forty pages instead of eight."

At the moment Duncan came in the door and stopped.

"Come on in and get busy, Duncan," said Joe.

"I don't want to get into a scrap with Bland," said the other.

"There won't be any scrap," said Joe. "Tom has called the blow up off."

"All right," said the feeder, shedding his jacket and approaching the stone. "Where do I get a stick?"

"I'll get you one," said Joe, and he did.

"Aw, this ain't fair," said Duncan. "You're helping Bland and I ain't got no one to help me. It'll take me all night to get away with that mountain."

"I hope it will, you blamed lobster," growled Tom. "You ought to set up the whole business, for the whole thing was your fault. And you ought to be made to pay for the resetting of the job, and the time it will take to make it up and lock it up again."

"I didn't mean nothing. I didn't expect you'd fall over my foot."

"Of course, you didn't. What did you shove it in front of me for then? If I hadn't promised Joe I'd let it go I'd knock seven kinds of tar out of you," and Tom looked as if he meant it.

Duncan shut up and went to work in a listless way, which promised to keep him at work all night. Joe and Tom, on the contrary, worked like a house afire, and Tom's mountain of pi melted rapidly down. Just as the clock struck eight, Joe dumped the last stickful on the second galley. He gathered up the quads and distributed them in the cases where they belonged and then brushed the spaces off into a paper.

"How are you coming on, you slow poke?" grinned Tom, willing to forgive Duncan now that the penalty had been wiped out on his side.

"How do you s'pose with only me a-doing it?" said the feeder. "I ain't quarter through."

"I wish you luck. I suppose we'll find you here when we come to work in the morning?" chuckled Tom.

"Do you think I'm going to stay here alone?"

"The watchman will be here."

"Rats. If you chaps are done I'm going to quit, too."

"If that pi ain't all up when the foreman comes

in the morning you'll hear from him, and I hope you will, good and proper," said Tom.

"I'll tell him Joe helped you out."

"Tell him. What do I care. If Joe felt like doing it that's his business."

Joe and his friend put on their jackets, walked out and laid their course for a boat-house half a mile below the Peck residence.

CHAPTER III.—The Lovers Meet.

"It's ten minutes of eight, Miss Madge," said Kittie Drew, looking at the gilt clock which stood on a bracket shelf in the corner of Miss Mason's boudoir. "The boys are due in a few minutes, and we must put the light in the window of the vacant room to let them know that everything is serene."

"Well, light your own lamp and take it in there. I can't spare mine yet, for I haven't quite finished my toilet," replied Madge.

"What me to go alone into the haunted room?" exclaimed Kittie, with a little shudder. "Oh, dear, no. I wouldn't dare."

"Why, you goose, what are you afraid of?" laughed Madge.

"I'm afraid the spook might catch me."

"You know there isn't any such thing."

"Indeed, I know there is. My granny used to tell me stories about them that made the chills run up and down my back. Why, once upon a time—"

"Never mind, Kittie, I don't want to hear any of your ghost stories. If you're afraid to go alone into that room, we'll both go in together, then, for the boys won't come up unless they see the light. Besides, we've got to put the ladder out. Light your lamp."

Kittie went to her own room across the corridor and presently returned with her lamp. Although there was both gas and electric light installed clear out to the suburbs of Corinth, neither had been introduced into Captain Peck's residence. Madge took the rope ladder out of the closet and the girls started for the unoccupied chamber, which was used by the four young people for their clandestine meetings.

Two old trunks filled with clothes, which Madge and her uncle had found in the room when they took possession of the house, were used by the boys to sit on, while the girls brought a couple of small light rockers for themselves. The light was suffered to remain in the window after the boys climbed in because there was no other place for it. Kittie had her hand on the knob of the door of the alleged haunted room when the passage was lit up by a flash of lightning and the distant rumble of thunder struck upon their ears.

"Oh, dear, how that startled me!" exclaimed Kittie.

"Aren't you the nervous thing!" laughed Madge.

"I can't help it. I'm always expecting something will happen in that room."

"What could happen in it?"

"This wing of the house has always had the name of being haunted."

"Uncle and I have lived here five years and

we've never been disturbed by such foolishness. Go ahead."

They entered the room. Kittie ran to the window, opened it and looked out on the river.

"All's quiet. I don't hear their boat," she said. "Oh, dear, there's another flash. I verily believe a thunderstorm is coming up. I don't think the boys will come to-night."

"Joe will come," said Madge, putting the light in the window.

After dropping the ladder out the girls waited for their beaux to appear, but owing to the incident at the printing-office that afternoon, Joe and Tom were behindhand. In the meantime the thunderstorm came on apace. The boys were in the boat on the river rowing toward the "castle."

"Say, Joe, hadn't we better put back?" said Tom.

"Put back! What for?"

"We're liable to be caught by the storm that's coming up."

"We'll get up to the vacant room before that hits this vicinity."

"And then we'll be stuck there. Suppose the old grampus were to get on to us being there it would be no silly thing to slide down the ladder and then down the rope into the boat, in the wind and rain. The boat might upset and dump us into the river," said Tom.

"Haven't you got the nerve to face a little thing like that for the sake of your best girl? Well, I have. I'd hang under that window on the ladder all through the storm rather than break my date with Madge."

"I guess you would. You've got an iron nerve, Joe, but some day you may end in a blow-up."

"As the balloon said when they started to inflate it with hot air," chuckled Joe.

"Here we are under the wall of the old grampus's castle," said Tom.

"The light is in the window all right, so the coast is clear," said Joe.

The boat glided in close to the wall and Tom neatly flung the looped end of the rope over one of the spikes. The slack was taken in and secured through a ring in the bows. Joe scrambled up first, and was followed by Tom as soon as he started up the ladder. The lightning lighted up their ascending figures. Joe tapped on the window three times—the usual signal.

"There's the boys," cried Kittie.

"Open the window and let them in. Aren't they the dear fellows to come in spite of the thunderstorm?" said Madge.

Kittie flung the window, which was made of colored glass, and worked on hinges, wide open.

"Hello, Kittie, here we are," said Little Joe scrambling into the room.

In a few moments Tom followed, and then the ladder was pulled in to keep it from getting wet by the rain that was coming.

"Run and get the rockers, Kittie," said Madge. Kittie got them.

"Oh, dear, I don't like a thunderstorm," she said.

"Don't worry," said Tom. "I'll protect you."

At that moment the storm burst upon the landscape with a tremendous rush of wind, accompanied by a vivid flash of lightning and a tre-

mendous peal of thunder. The girls screamed and grabbed each other.

"See! This storm is a fine background for a haunted chamber, ain't it, Joe?" said Tom.

"Surest thing you know, old chap. Say, Miss Madge, tell us how this room came to get its reputation," said Joe.

"I'd rather tell you some other time," said Madge.

"Some other time! Why this is just the night for it," said Joe.

"Go on and let us hear about it," said Tom.

After much persuasion she reluctantly began:

"This house was built for an old man who came from the West. He was a prospector, whatever that is. It is said that he had lots of money, but one day he disappeared."

"Disappeared!" cried Joe.

"Yes, and nobody ever heard where he went for he never came back."

"What, after building this house?"

"Yes. It was shut up for years waiting for him, and then the county officers took charge of it and it was rented to Miss Madge's uncle."

"Where does the haunted business come in?" asked Joe.

"Shortly after the old man disappeared, and when the place was known to be deserted, lights were seen in this room."

"That's nothing. Might have been tramps who had got in," said Tom.

"No, for ghostly faces were seen at the windows."

"Since the house has been occupied by you and your uncle, Miss Madge, nothing like that has happened."

"Nothing at all," replied the girl.

"Then you can gamble on it that this room is no more haunted than any other room in the house, or any other house in town," said Joe.

A blinding flash of lightning followed his words, succeeded almost instantly by a crash that seemed to stagger the building from roof to cellar. The rear wall of the room opened up a huge fissure from the ceiling to below the floor. The shock stunned the four young people.

CHAPTER IV.—Investigations.

The shock had naturally been felt all through the house. Captain Peck was in the act of getting into bed and he landed on the floor instead. When he had recovered his wits it struck him that the house had been struck by a bolt, and he wondered if any injury had been done. Presently somebody knocked on his door.

"Who's there?" he asked.

"Me, sir," said the voice of Hiram Sprague, gardener and general factotum.

"Was the house struck that time, Hiram?" asked the captain.

"Yes, sir. The river wall is cracked all the way up through the storeroom and sittin'-room on this floor. I reckon the break must go all the way up to the roof."

"My gracious!" exclaimed Captain Peck, opening the door and admitting his man. "My niece and her maid must be badly frightened, for the

top floor got it harder than any other part of the house. I must go up there, and you'd better come with me. Wait till I put on some of my things."

In a few minutes the captain was ready to go up stairs and he started, accompanied by Sprague. By that time Joe, Tom and the girls had recovered from the concussion, but they were all considerably shaken up. The storm was passing away, taking the wind and rain with it. It was one of those short, but terrific electrical disturbances, that always seem to reserve a thunderbolt for its finish, then it fades away, like an exhausted athlete at the end of a gruelling race. The girls were almost wrecks, and the boys judged they had better bring their visit to a close. They were saying good-bys to their trembling sweethearts when steps were heard in the corridor outside and then came a knocking at Madge's door.

"Madge! Madge! It is I, your uncle!" exclaimed a foghorn voice.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed the girl, catching Joe, by the arm. "My uncle is outside. You boys must not be discovered here. Quick! throw out the ladder and—"

Bang, bang, bang! went the captain's huge fist on the door again. The girls looked terribly rattled, for they knew that Captain Peck, receiving no answer, would make an investigation to learn why they were deaf to his summons. Tom threw the window open, tossed out the ladder, followed himself, but with a certain amount of care, for the descent was risky, and a misstep might prove fatal. Joe had to wait his turn, and while he stood there, Hiram Sprague called the captain's attention to the light that shone under the door of the unoccupied room.

"My goodness! The room must have caught fire so from the lightning. Come with me," and he started for the door. Joe and the girls heard him coming. It was clearly impossible for the boy to make his exit window before Captain Peck got into the room and caught a glimpse of him. In an instant he made up his mind what he would do.

"Blow out the light," he whispered, and darted for the back of the room.

Madge obeyed, in a flutter of apprehension. Kittie, with great presence of mind, closed the window. Captain Peck burst into the room.

"Why, why; there's no fire here, and yet I can swear I saw a light," he exclaimed, clearly much mystified.

"There was a light," asserted Sprague.

"It was our lamp, uncle, which went out," said Madge.

The captain jumped nearly a foot at hearing a voice, and his niece's at that, coming out of the darkness.

"You here, Madge!" he ejaculated, in astonishment. "How came you in this room alone?"

"I'm not alone. Kittie is with me."

"Where are you both?"

"Right here," and the girls advanced toward him.

"What brought you here?"

"Did you hear that dreadful crash, uncle? We were frightened to death."

"This corner of the house was hit by a bolt,

Sprague says. You both came in to see if any damage had been done, I suppose. Well, what did you find?"

"Nothing, uncle. We didn't—"

"Well, well, give me the lamp and return to your rooms. Got a match, Sprague?"

Madge's heart jumped into her throat, for a light would reveal the presence of Little Joe, and then a serious explanation would be in order.

"Here you are, sir," said the gardener.

"Strike it, my hands are full," said the captain.

Sprague struck the match on his trousers. The gleam showed the captain with the lamp in one hand and the chimney in the other, as well as the outlines of the two trembling girls. Madge gripped Kittie by the hand to nerve herself for the explosion that was certain to follow the discovery of Joe. Nothing happened, however, for Joe had disappeared. The girls gasped, for they knew the two trunks were locked, which blocked any possibility of his having crawled into one of them. He couldn't have slipped out by the door, for the captain and his man stood close to it. Where then could he have gone? Surely not through the gaping hole made by the lightning, for that would mean a sixty-foot fall to the yard below.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Captain Peck, as his eyes took in the fissure in the wall. "The lightning certainly cut things up here. Look at that wall, Sprague. A long jagged fissure, with a hole big enough to crawl through on the level of the floor. If that goes all the way down, as you said it did, I guess it will require considerable repairing."

They walked over and inspected the wreck with the light of the lamp. While they stood there looking it over, the girls were thinking about Joe.

"Where could Joe have hidden himself?" asked Madge.

"I haven't any idea, miss," whispered back Kittie.

"Do you think he fell out through that hole?"

"Don't mention such a thing. It would be too dreadful."

"Are you girls there yet?" snapped the captain, turning around. "Go to your rooms at once and turn in."

Madge and Kittie had no alternative except to obey, but their minds were much disturbed about Little Joe. A few minutes later they heard the captain and the gardener slam the door of the unoccupied room, and come through the corridor. Captain Peck knocked at Kittie's door.

"Here's your lamp," he said.

Kittie opened the door and took it. The mogul of the house and his man then went on downstairs. Kittie knocked softly on Madge's door, and when her mistress opened it, she said:

"Shall we go back to the room and see what has happened to Joe?"

"Yes," said Madge. "I couldn't sleep a wink to-night if I didn't know he was safe. Come."

They went to the head of the stairs and listened. All was silent below, and, taking courage, they tiptoed to the unoccupied room. Kittie raised the lamp on high as Madge went ahead. Standing beside the window, in the act of opening it, was Little Joe.

"Joe!" exclaimed Madge joyfully, feeling as if it would be a satisfaction to her to throw her arms around his neck and kiss him. Where were you?"

"Where?" he grinned. "Guess."

"I couldn't."

"I was just practicing a bit of gymnastics."

"Why, what do you mean?"

"All the time your uncle and his man were in this room I was hanging within a yard of them."

"Hanging! You don't mean outside—that you crept through that hole?" gasped Madge incredulously.

"Where else? You didn't see me in this room."

"Why, how did you ever do it?"

"Easily enough, though it took some nerve. If I'd lost my grip, the dog would have had my bones to play with."

"Well, Tom Bland didn't say more than the truth when he told us you had an iron nerve. It seems incredible that you would have dared to do it."

"Now I must rejoin Tom," said Joe; "but hold the light a moment. I want to see what came out of the wall into my hand."

He held up a paper which was crumpled and soiled. Opening it out, it appeared to be a kind of diagram of some locality, with sundry descriptive words, such as "wall," "tree," "gully," etc. At the bottom were some consecutive words, several lines of them, probably explanatory of the whole, but Joe did not bother reading them.

"I'll look this over at my leisure and see what it refers to. It hardly belongs to your uncle, for it came out of the wall. Rather an odd place for it to be," said Joe, thrusting it into his pocket.

Removing the noose from the spike, and telling Tom to let out some slack, he slid down the doubled rope into the boat and then pulled it clear of the spike.

"The old grampus nabbed you, I suppose, and has been reading you the riot act ever since, eh?" said Tom, as they pushed off from the wall.

"Not on your life! He didn't get me worth a cent," replied Joe.

"Where did you hide—behind one of the trunks?"

"No. I crawled out through the hole made by the thunderbolt, and clung to the wall like a human fly."

Joe then mentioned the paper he found in the wall, and said it looked like a diagram of a piece of property.

"We'll look it over to-morrow, and see what we can make out of it," he said.

In a few minutes they ran alongside of the boathouse landing, made the boat fast, and started for the cottage where they both boarded.

CHAPTER V.—Joe's Iron Nerve.

At five minutes of eight next morning Joe and Tom entered the Record job room, peeled off their jackets, rolled up their sleeves, put on their aprons and were ready to start to work when the whistle sounded. The foreman walked in, and as he passed the stone where the three boys had worked the evening before he noticed there was still a considerable pile of pi there.

"Is that as far as you got last night, Bland?" he asked.

"No, sir; I finished up my half, with Joe's help," replied Tom.

"Hooker helped you out, eh?"

"Yes, sir. Kind of him, wasn't it? He knew I didn't deserve the deal I got."

"That bunch is Duncan's, then?"

"It must be, for it isn't mine."

"What did you do with the spaces and quads?"

"The spaces are in a paper and the quads are in the cases."

At that point Duncan sneaked in and took off his jacket. The foreman's eyes were on him.

"Come here, Duncan," he said sharply.

"You're in for a blow-up," grinned Tom.

"Why didn't you clean up that pi?" asked Buckley.

"I did as much as I could," said the feeder.

"When did you leave?"

"After eight."

"When did you get through, Bland?"

"About eight o'clock."

"He had Joe Hooker to help him, and they went through his half in no time. I ain't no type-sticker. I couldn't have finished that all night."

"You'll stay to-night and finish, then. If I find a letter left on the stone when I come in the morning you'll hear from me. Understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"And don't you put any of it in a paper and hide it away. If I catch you doing that trick, I'll discharge you. Now get to work."

Joe finished his tabular corrections and was put to work correcting a restaurant daily bill-of-fare, and after that he went on newspaper advertisements. He and Tom always took their noonday meal at the little restaurant next door, and they went there when the whistle blew at half-past twelve. Right after dinner Joe was called on to make up the eight pages that had been pried. He shoved them on a stone as fast as he tied them up, imposing them as he proceeded. Then he got one of the chases used on the pony cylinder and laid it around the pages. He placed metal furniture between the pages, allowing a couple of picas extra for the center fold, each way.

He completed the job with wooden furniture and patent quoins. After giving it a final planing down, he tightened the quoins, lifted the form off the stone and carried it over to the pony, which was waiting for it. The afternoon passed quickly enough, and in due time Joe and Tom started for their home. Supper wasn't ready when they arrived, so they went up to their room. Joe produced the diagram he had found in the wall of the "castle," and the boys bent over it. The first thing Joe did was to read the writing at the bottom. It ran as follows:

"This is the diagram of the gold cache in Blank County, Mo. Eighteen miles southwest of Plunketville, a village on the Missouri River. One mile beyond woods is a ruin. Pass in through door, follow measurements on diagram, and you will land a big bonanza."

"Land a big bonanza," said Joe. "That sounds good. What do you think of it, Tom?"

"I don't know," replied Tom, rather dubiously.

"Sounds like a fairy tale."

"This must have belonged to the man who built

the Peck castle. Kittie said he had a lot of money, so he must have found the gold cache."

The supper call sounded at that moment and the boys went down to the little dining-room, after Joe had put the diagram away in his trunk. Stolen pleasures are always the sweetest, so before the week was out the boys made another date with Madge and Kittie to visit the unoccupied room, the wall of which had not yet been repaired. Unfortunately for them, Noah Wood was down at the river bank for some reason or another when they left the boathouse and began rowing up the river. He recognized them and wondered where they were bound in the boat. Curiosity induced him to follow them along the bank, and he saw them steer in for the Peck "castle." He went as far as the wall would allow him to, and then crouching down in the gloom of the evening he saw them make fast to the spike, climb the wall, and finally clamber up the rope ladder to the window and disappear.

"Ho! I wonder what's their game?" he muttered. "Here's a chance to get the Indian sign on that lobster, Little Joe. I'll call around to the front door, ask for Captain Peck, and tell him what's going on in the rear. I wish I could send their boat adrift, but I can't get to it. Never mind. The captain will cook their goose for them."

The young spy rubbed his hands together and chuckled with satisfaction. Then he started for the front gate. The gate was always kept locked at night, but there was a bell handle which a visitor could ring at any time. Noah rang it, and presently Hiram Sprague came out to see who was there.

"Hello! Who's there?" asked the gardener.

"Me," said the youth, as if that one word was sufficient to establish his identity.

"Who are you? Let's hear your name," said Sprague.

"Noah Wood."

Noah was not known to either the gardener or the captain.

"What do you want?" asked Sprague.

"I want to see Captain Peck."

"What do you want to see him about? The captain doesn't often receive visitors at night. He goes to bed early, and doesn't want to be disturbed."

"I've got something important to tell him," said Noah.

The gardener thought he had been sent by somebody in the neighborhood with a message to the captain, so he opened the gate and let him in. Noah followed him up to the front door and into the house. He was left in the hall to cool his heels until Sprague went to see Captain Peck. The ex-river skipper was reading a paper in his room. Sprague was directed to bring Noah up to a small ante-room.

"Well," said the captain, when Noah appeared, "you have a message for me, young man. I will hear it."

Noah lost no time in acquainting Captain Peck with the state of affairs at the back of his house.

"Eh? What's that? You say you saw a couple of thieves enter my premises from the rear?" exclaimed the choleric old gentleman, bristling up.

"I dunno as they are thieves, sir, for somebody

threw a rope ladder to them from the window above."

"Confound your impertinence! Do you dare hint that my niece would do such a thing?"

Noah was somewhat cowed by Captain Peck's inflammatory language and actions, but, nevertheless, he stuck to his story. He added that he guessed the boys had come to visit Miss Mason on the quiet and he had reason to believe that the young lady thought considerably of the smaller of the two lads, whose name he said was Little Joe Hooker, and who worked at the printing business in the Record office. The captain flew into a rage on hearing that. He rang for Sprague and when that worthy appeared he told him to look out of the sitting-room window and see if there was a rowboat tied to one of the wall spikes and also directed him to look and see if there was a rope ladder hanging from the window of the unoccupied room. While the gardener was away on his errand Captain Peck paced the room like an angry lion in a circus menagerie. Sprague returned in a few minutes and reported the presence of a boat, tied as described, but said he could see no rope ladder.

"Stay here till I return," said the captain to Noah. "If I find your news to be correct, I shall reward you."

"I'll stay," said Noah, with a satisfied grin.

Directing the gardener to keep him company, the old man started upstairs with fire in his eyes, for the idea that his niece received visitors clandestinely at night in the unoccupied room made him furious.

CHAPTER VI.—The Girls Caught.

In the excess of his rage the captain forgot that it is necessary to use caution in order to catch people off their guard. The noise he made in stumping up the stairs easily reached the ears of Joe, Tom and the girls while they were chatting familiarly together.

"My gracious! My uncle!" cried Madge, quite panic-stricken.

"Out with the light, and skip—both of you!" cried Joe, springing for the open window and tossing out the ladder.

The girls flew to Madge's room, Tom following them with the rockers, which he dropped in the corridor and returned to the unoccupied room. Joe was already in the boat, and Tom hurried down and joined him. It took but a moment to detach the rope from the spike and push off into the river. In the meantime the captain, puffing like a grampus, reached the landing. The girls had only time to get one of the rockers in the room. The other stood in Captain Peck's path, and as there was no light in the corridor, he fell over it and went sprawling on the floor. The racket he made brought the girls to the door of Madge's room.

"Who's there?" asked Madge, just as if she did not know.

The captain had barked his shins, and the pain added fuel to his passion.

"Confound it, who put that chair there for me to fall over?" he roared.

"I did, sir," said Kittle. "It belongs in my room. I was going to take it back in a moment.

I had no idea anybody was coming up here. I hope you didn't hurt yourself, sir."

"Fire and fury! I've torn all the skin off my shins. How dare you lay such a trap for me? Don't you know any better, you—you——"

He was going to use some strong expression, but recollected in time that he was not addressing his old deckhands. Kittle protested that she was dreadfully sorry, and that she hoped the captain would excuse her.

"Give me your lamp," he cried to Madge.

"My lamp, uncle?"

"Yes; hurry up, do you hear!" he snapped, rubbing his shins tenderly.

Madge delayed as much as possible, and was so long in bringing it that the captain lost what little patience he had left, rushed in and snatched it out of her hand. Then he limped along the corridor and entered the unoccupied room. It was dark there, and without the sign of an occupant. The captain glared around the apartment, looked behind the trunks, in the four corners, and finding nothing in the shape of a pair of youthful intruders, he went to the window and opened it, flashing the lamplight on the bricks. Of course he saw the rope ladder hanging down, which, under the hurried circumstances, the girls had had no chance to remove. What the captain said when he saw this proof of Noah Wood's statement almost set the woodwork on fire. If he was mad before he was boiling now. He yanked the ladder into the room and detached it from the stout hooks Kittle had driven into the wall to hold the upper end. Detaching it from the hooks, and being unable to make out anything on the river at the base of the wall, he shut the window and, with the ladder over his arm, he returned to the entrance of Madge's room where she and Kittle stood in some apprehension as to what results were to follow the captain's unexpected visit to that part of the house. That he had somehow got wind of the visit of the boys seemed clear. When they saw Captain Peck approaching with the ladder on his arm their hearts began beating like a trip-hammer, for they knew they were in for it.

"Oh, Kittle, he's got the ladder!" whispered Madge.

"It can't be helped. Keep up your courage. We've got to face it out. I'll stand by you," returned Kittle.

"So," exclaimed the captain, "you've been entertaining company on the sly, have you, miss?" and he looked daggers at Madge.

"Entertaining company on the sly! Why, uncle——"

"Don't you dare try to deny it!" roared the old man, his whiskers bristling out like the quills of an angry porcupine. "Look at this," holding up the ladder.

"I'm looking, uncle."

"What do you call it, miss?"

"A rope ladder."

"Exactly. That's just what it is. How came it to be hanging outside the window of the vacant room? Answer me that, miss!"

"Why——"

"Jibbooms and marlingspikes! Why don't you answer?"

"How can she, captain, when you won't give her a chance?" put in Kittle.

"Shut up; don't you put your ear in!" cried Captain Peck, glaring at the maid whom he confidently believed to be guilty of connivance in the affair.

"You don't have to shout at me. I can hear you," she replied indignantly.

"You needn't answer, miss," said the captain to Madge. "You know all about the matter. You thought your old fool of an uncle and guardian was being, eh? Fine and dandy! What will you blow next, I wonder?"

"Why, uncle, how agitated you are!" said Madge.

"Impudent! Who says I am? Since you are all champagne, I'm as cool as an iceberg! Do you hear?"

"Yes, uncle," sarcastically. "Thank you for covering the wood over my eyes, eh? But I've caught you—and you, too, you traitress!" pointing at the maid. "What did I hire you for?"

"As maid to Miss Madge," replied Kittie.

"Yes, but what was the understanding between us? Why do I pay you twice as much as you asked? Wasn't it to keep an eye on your young mistress and report to us if she encouraged the attentions of any young fellow in the neighborhood? And this is the way you are doing it—keeping your mistress to herself! Aren't you ashamed of yourself? If you aren't you ought to be."

Kittie remained silent, but she didn't look as if her conscience distressed her very much.

"Who were the boys who had the nerve to enter my house without my knowledge?" he said, turning to Madge.

"I don't know what makes you think that any boys were in the house," she said.

"O, you don't, miss? Isn't this ladder evidence enough? And if it isn't, I've got a witness downstairs who saw two boys climb up into the vacant room, and saw the ladder thrown down so they could get up. In the face of that evidence, do you deny that the fact isn't true?"

"Who is this witness?" asked Madge.

"Who is he? A very proper young fellow named Noah Wood."

"Noah Wood!" explained Madge.

"Yes, Noah Wood."

"Noah! What a name!" uttered Kittie.

"What's that to you, young woman? It isn't yours."

"I should hope not. It's a good name for tale-hearers and sneaks."

"Ha! How dare you call him a tale-hearer? He very properly brought me the information, and I'm going to reward him for it."

"I would; then he'll be more like Judas and his thirty pieces of silver."

"You're impudent, Miss Irew."

"I have my tongue in my own mouth," muttered Kittie.

"What did you say?" asked the captain suspiciously.

"I was only thinking, sir."

"Send I bring up Noah Wood and let him tell his story," said the captain to his maid.

"I wouldn't see the witness!" cried Madge. "I don't care!"

"I can say, because he discovered your peccadilloes. You want your girl, then?"

"I've got nothing to say."

"Of course not. Who is this chap that Noah Wood says is a printer at the Record office? Oh, yes, his name is Joe Hooker. How come you to know him?"

"I met him at Sunday-school."

"And you encouraged him to call on you?"

"He asked to call on me and I told him he could."

"That's all nonsense! I am surprised that you should care to associate with a working boy. You ought to look higher."

"Joe isn't very tall, I'll admit; but he's as smart as any six-footer in shoe leather," said Madge, with some spirit.

"Bah! Suppose he is smart, he's only a working boy. You must give up his companionship. He isn't worth thinking about. In fact, there is nobody in this vicinity who is good enough for you."

"Give up Joe? No; that I never will do."

"But I say you must. Do you understand me?" said her uncle, waving his hand again. "I'll get a watch, and if he comes around again I'll have him arrested for trespass. Who is the other boy? Another working boy. I'll be bound, since they come together."

"He's Kittie's friend."

"Your maid's friend, eh? So, that accounts for her faithlessness to me. Interest! She told me out in order to enjoy the society of her friend on the sly, too. Well, I won't have this sort of thing any more. And to begin with I'll get you a new maid."

"I won't have a new one," said Madge decidedly. "Kittie is good enough for me."

"She isn't good enough for me, and I'm paying her her wages. You'll pack up to-morrow, young lady, and leave the house," he said, turning to Kittie.

"Don't you do any such thing, Kittie," said Madge.

"What's that? How dare you interfere with my arrangements, Madge? I am your legal guardian, and you have no right to question my authority!" roared the captain.

"I don't care if you are my guardian. You have no right to make me unhappy!" cried the girl, beginning to cry.

That in a woman's eyes always got the captain's goat, and particularly when the eyes happened to be his niece's. The last thing he thought of was to make her unhappy, and so he began to take water.

"Well, well, don't cry, Madge. You know I can't stand that. I know I'm an old fool, and that I don't always do the right thing. My one desire is to make you happy, my dear, so we won't say anything more about your maid going. She shall stay if you want her to; but I don't want any more of these goings on. Promise me now, you'll do as I wish. I think only of your interest—and—and I don't want to lose you. I don't want any man or boy, be he rich or poor, to deprive me of the only solace I have in my old age," said the captain, his voice shaking. "I shan't live long, anyway, and when I am gone you will be your own mistress and can do as you please, and marry whom you choose."

Madge was a good girl, and had an affectionate disposition. She was very fond of her iras-

cible old uncle, and when he showed the tender part of his nature it got her goat, too. She threw her arms around his neck and asked him to forgive her, and promised to be good henceforth, and do all he wanted her to; but, with a little sob, she didn't want to give Joe up. He was the finest (sob) boy in the world, and it really wasn't fair (sob) to deprive her of his friendship. She would send him word that he mustn't call at the house again without her uncle's permission, so there wasn't any reason why any watch should be set to try and catch him.

"Well, we'll see," said the captain soothingly, as he patted her head.

"You'll let me see him once in a while, won't you, uncle?" said Madge coaxingly.

"I'll think about it," said the old man, not caring to commit himself to the proposition.

"Say yes, you good-tempered old dear," said Madge, patting his cheek.

"Now you're trying to wheedle me. I won't be wheedled. I'm not good tempered, either. I'm very ill-tempered."

"Now, my dear uncle——"

"Marlingspikes and jibbooms! I don't wonder they say that a pretty woman can turn a man around his finger, for you do about as you please with me. Go to bed now. I'm going downstairs, for I left that young man, Noah Wood, in the ante-room, and I promised to reward him for his information. There, good night," and the old skipper hurried away.

CHAPTER VII.—Capt. Peck Makes a Discovery.

"We had another close call that time, Joe," said Tom, as they rowed down the river to the boat-house.

"You're right, we did. I wonder how the girls made out?" replied Little Joe.

"I couldn't guess, but I guess there's no evidence against them."

The boys went home and turned in. About eleven next morning the foreman came over to where Joe was correcting a form for the jobber presided over by Tom and told him that a gentleman wanted to see him out in the counting-room.

"A gentleman!" said Joe. "What does he look like?"

"I didn't see him. The boy brought the message in."

Joe wondered who the visitor could be, but couldn't guess. When he went out he nearly had a fit when he recognized Captain Peck.

"Oh, Lord!" he ejaculated. "The fat is in the fire, I'm afraid."

"Are you Joe Hooker?" asked the captain sharply.

"Yes, sir," replied Joe, with the utmost politeness.

"You called at my house last evening and saw my niece, didn't you?"

"Yes, sir."

"By way of a boat and a rope ladder?"

"Yes, sir."

"Is it your customary way to meet young ladies on the sly?"

"No, sir. I prefer the front door; but when the main entrance is interdicted, I generally stay

away. In the case to which you refer, I took the liberty, with Miss Madge's permission, to effect an entrance on the quiet. That method was not without risk, but I never figure on that. I suppose you have come to pull me over the coals. Well, I plead guilty and tender you an apology for acting contrary to your wishes. I admit that I had no right to intrude on your premises, even to keep faith with so charming a girl as your niece, for you are her guardian, and have a right to bar me out if you choose to do so. I hope you won't blame Miss Madge, for I put the idea in her head and furnished the rope ladder. If you think I ought to be punished for my conduct, I will submit to any reasonable penalty you choose to inflict. I think that is fair, Captain Peck."

The captain had not come there to get Joe's scalp, though he intended to hand him a good talking to, but Joe's open and manly way of admitting his guilt, and taking all the blame on his own shoulders, quite mollified the skipper. He expected that the boy would try to lie out of the matter, or at least take shelter behind any kind of an excuse that promised to help him out. The captain was a curious combination of contrary sentiments. It was the hardest thing in the world to know how to take him. When he came to the Record office he was dead sore on Joe. When he left ten minutes later he thought the lad was the only boy in the town worth shucks. And wonderful to relate he voluntarily gave Joe permission to call on Madge by way of the front door. How did Joe accomplish such a miracle? By his personal magnetism. He unconsciously hypnotized the captain. That is really the secret of success in life, if you add a few other necessary qualities such as determination, ambition and energy. When Joe told Tom at noon about Captain Peck's visit and its happy results, his friend could hardly believe his ears.

"Do you mean to say he told you you could call and see his niece?" he said.

"He certainly did, and he was very nice about it, too," replied Joe.

"Well, if that doesn't get my goat! And he didn't give you a wiggling about last night?"

"Nary wiggling. He was mildly sarcastic at first and then became positively friendly. He shook hands with me when he left."

"I don't see how you did it. Why, you know Kittie says he's a regular fire-eater when things don't jibe with him, and certainly the way we called on the girls last night was not calculated to sweeten his disposition. Something must have been wrong with him. His liver must have taken a day off. Such a miracle can't possibly hold out. When you do call, tugged out in your glad rags, he might set the dogs on you. If I were you, I'd go slow, and wait till you saw your charmer first," said Joe.

"I'm willing to take the chances," laughed Joe.

On the following afternoon Joe got a note from Madge, the first he had ever received from her. She explained all that had taken place after he and Tom had made their hurried exit from the unoccupied room.

"I thought I should have died when I saw my uncle returning from the vacant room with the rope ladder on his arm," she wrote. "I knew that Kittie and I were in for a hot time. And it

was hot, believe me, for a while. My gracious, Nunkey was mad enough to make the sparks fly! I pretended to be brave, but I was just shaking in my shoes. And Kittie got hers, too. But after all the explosion no damage was done. Nunkey and I kissed and made it all up again. He's a dear old darling in spite of his temper, and I love him very dearly. Now who do you suppose was the cause of all the trouble? Why, that hateful Noah Wood! He saw you and Tom rowing up the river, watched you climb up the wall into the room, and then went and told my uncle all the facts. Isn't he the tell-tale and sneak? Uncle handed him a \$5 bill, but I don't believe he has any great opinion of him. Uncle wanted me to give you up, and promise to have nothing to do with you any more; but I just wouldn't agree to such a thing. He said you were only a working boy, and that I ought to look higher. Now, after all that, the strangest thing has happened. Really I'm so surprised that I can't make up my mind whether it really is true or not. What do you think? He says he's going to let you call on me by way of the front door. I nearly had a fit when he told me that. I couldn't believe it until he assured me that our friendship had his O. K. Now what do you think of that? Such a change of heart doesn't seem natural, but he's passed his word and that's something he never breaks. Under these delightful circumstances I shall expect to see you here on Sunday evening. Kittie wants you to bring Tom, but I'm afraid that would be pushing a good thing too far. We'll try and make them happy later. That's all now.

"MADGE."

Joe was delighted with Madge's letter, and, of course, he was pleased to death to receive her invitation to call on Sunday evening. On Sunday evening Joe presented himself at the Peck "castle" and was admitted without question by the gardener. He spent two hours very pleasantly with Madge, who told him that her uncle had placed the time limit at ten o'clock. She said he would be welcome every Sunday evening, but the captain barred any other night. Joe said he would fall in with whatever arrangements the old man made, as he was the doctor, and so when he left it was with the understanding that they would come together again on the following Sunday.

CHAPTER VIII.—The Cache of Gold.

The Record was issued on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday mornings. When the hands knocked off for dinner on those days, they each received a copy of the paper. After eating his meal on the following Tuesday, Joe opened up the paper to read the latest news before going back to work. Tom did the same. Joe was glancing over the first page when his eye was arrested by a long clipping from a St. Louis daily which was headed: "A Cache of Gold."

The young printer was interested at once. The story went on to state that somewhere in the State of Missouri, the exact locality being involved in doubt, there existed a buried treasure, the estimated value of which was a quarter of a million in gold coin. The money had been hid-

den by a Frenchman who had set out from the East with it, intending to cross the plains with one of the wagon trains that periodically left St. Joseph for the land of the Golden West. His purpose was to start a bank in the young and hustling city of San Francisco. His steps were dogged by an enemy whose object was to murder him and steal the fortune in gold. Becoming aware of the plan of his pursuer, he endeavored to throw him off the scent by taking an unfrequented route across Missouri.

In this he succeeded, but his success proved fatal to him. He lost his way in the wilds, and his pack mules died one by one until he was stranded many miles from the nearest village. Unable to carry his gold further, he made a cache of it, a prevailing custom at that time, and then, with the last of his provisions, struck out for the Missouri River. After incredible hardships he finally reached the village of Plunketville more dead than alive. Three days later the fever that was on him carried him to his grave, but before he died he told the man who attended him about the cache of gold, and gave him directions how to find it, all of which the man took down on a piece of paper. It was some time before the lucky possessor of the paper found the chance to look up the cache.

He never reached it, for he was overhauled by some ruffians on the way, who shot him and took his mules and what money he had. They overlooked, or paid no attention to, the paper, which was found on the skeleton many years after by a prospector on his way to the Colorado mining district. The prospector found the cache, but because the locality was infested by a gang of bandits, he did not deem it prudent to carry off at the time more than a small part of the gold. He located in Corinth, built himself a substantial house on the suburbs, and proceeded to enjoy life. One day a letter came to him which greatly upset him. Immediately afterward he hired a gang of men and surrounded his house with a high brick wall, the top of which bristled with spikes. Several months passed away and then it became generally known around town that the prospector had shut the house up and had gone away. He never returned, and after many years the county authorities took possession of the building and it was sold to a well-known politician for a mere fraction of its value, owing, it was said, to the fact that the house had acquired a ghostly reputation, curious sights and sounds having been seen and heard there.

The fate of the prospector, however, was revealed the other day by a man who was brought in a dying condition to one of the St. Louis hospitals, said the paper, and when informed that he had no chance to recover, he told the nurse the story of the gold cache. He said he was one of a gang which had been searching for the money for years, but though they were sure they had hit upon the locality, they had failed to discover the cache. Having found out that the prospector was possessed of the secret, they had used many devices to get it from him, but failed. Finally he ran out of money and he started for the cache to secure some more of the gold, and they nabbed him on the way. On searching him, they failed to find the paper containing the directions; but judging he knew the way by heart, they

threatened to kill him unless he led them to the treasure.

This he promised to do, but during the night he made his escape. They started in pursuit, and next day found his lifeless body at the bottom of a deep, rocky gully into which he had fallen. They left him there, and several of them paid a secret visit to his house in Corinth and stayed there a week, searching it from cellar to roof for the paper, but failed to find it. And so, as far as he knew, the cache of gold still remained in its original hiding-place, only a portion of it having been taken away by the prospector at the time of his first and only visit.

When Joe reached the last word the whistle blew for the resumption of work, so with his mind in a tumult of excitement over the knowledge that he held the paper that pointed the way to the cache of gold, the existence of which now appeared to be positively assured, he hurried into the job-room of the Record office. We venture to say that he thought more about the buried gold than he did about the work he was engaged on, with the result that he made a number of blunders which got upon the foreman's nerves.

"What's the matter with you this afternoon, Hooker?" growled Buckley, when Joe handed him the stone proof of a four-page cover he had locked up for a quarto-medium jobber, and the foreman saw that the first page was imposed where the fourth page should have been.

"Nothing, sir," replied Joe. "What's the trouble? Anything the matter with that job?"

"Oh, no, there's nothing at all the matter with it," said Buckley sarcastically. "Look at it."

Joe looked the proof over and saw where the trouble was.

"I don't see how I came to do that," he said.

"You must have been dreaming about that pretty girl who called on you last week. Just fix that over and charge the time to distribution. This is the fourth mistake you've made this afternoon—more than you've made in two months. Aren't you well?"

"I'm all right. The trouble is, I've got something on my mind and I can't help thinking about it."

"Something unpleasant, eh?"

"No, it's something quite the opposite."

The foreman stared at him.

"Well, get busy," he said, walking to his desk.

Joe fixed the form and carried another proof to the foreman, who, after looking it over, handed it to the proof-reader for final revision. The foreman handed Joe a card to set up, the first line of which read "The Cash Store." When Joe handed the proof to the reader, the first line read "The Cache of Gold."

The reader corrected the job and brought it to the boy.

"What were you thinking about when you set that first line, Hooker?" he said. "Been reading a dime novel at dinner hour?"

"I guess I'm off my base this afternoon," replied Joe, when he noted his blunder.

Five o'clock finally came around and Joe started home with Tom.

"Did you read that Cache of Gold story in to-day's Record?" asked Joe.

"No. What about it?"

"Read it when we get home, and then you'll see."

"Can't you tell me about it? It'll save time."

"I'd rather you'd read it first."

"Cache of Gold—did somebody find a treasure?"

"Never mind. You read the story."

"I will, bet your boots. It must be something unusual for you to put it to me this way," said Tom.

No sooner had the boys reached their cottage home than Tom pulled his copy of the Record from his pocket.

"What page is the story on?" he asked.

"The first," replied Joe, as he started to change his clothes.

Tom found it right away and began to read it. Before he got half through it he began to see what it referred to.

"Say, that must be the cache you've got the paper about," he said.

"It is," said Joe.

"Some chap found it, I suppose, and that's how the St. Louis newspaper got hold of the story."

"You read on and you'll see."

Tom read on to the end.

"According to this, the gold is there yet, because nobody could find it without the paper you discovered in the prospector's house," he said. "If I were you, I'd take that paper and go and search for it."

"That's just what I intend to do. There seems to be a fortune awaiting the discoverer of the cache. I ought to stand the best show of finding it, as I have a line on its locality, and full directions to pick the exact spot out when I get on the ground."

"That's right," nodded Tom. "When do you think of starting on the job?"

"Right away, and I want you to go with me."

"Me!"

"Sure. I don't care to go alone, and I wouldn't want to take any stranger with me, for he'd want half, probably, and then might do me up to get the whole. Now if you will go, I'll give you a third of the treasure if we find it."

"A third! Gee!"

"Will you go?"

"Like a bird. I'm sick of feeding presses."

"All right. We'll throw up our jobs on Saturday, and start Monday."

CHAPTER IX.—Planning Their Trip.

"Madge will be surprised Sunday night when I tell her that we're going to leave town," said Joe, after supper.

"She won't like it," said Tom.

"Oh, yes, she will; for if we find the gold I'll stand a better show with the captain."

"We'll be swell guys then. No more typesticking or pressfeeding for us. We can open a bank."

"You can open a bank if you want to, and loan money without security to tramp printers, but I'm going to be a capitalist, and loan my money out on bonds and mortgages."

"And marry Miss Mason, I suppose," grinned Tom.

"I wouldn't mind if the captain let me, but I don't imagine he will, even if I was worth a million. He objects to her getting married at all till he hops the twig."

"I'm glad Kittie hasn't any strings on her. If I come back with fifty or sixty thousand, all I'll have to do will be to hold up my finger and she'll become Mrs. Tom Bland right off the reel."

A knock at the door interrupted them.

"Here is a note for you from Miss Mason, Joe."

"Come in," said Joe.

The lady of the house opened the door and said:

"A boy just left it."

"Thank you, Mrs. Foster," said Joe, taking it.

He tore the envelope open and began to read it. The news it contained rather jiggered him.

"I'll be jiggered!" he exclaimed.

"What's the matter?" asked Tom.

"Captain Peck is going on a trip to see an old friend, and he intends to take Madge and Kittie with him."

"The dickens!" exclaimed Tom, much astonished.

"They'll be gone may be a month. Madge says they're going right away, and that she will call at the office and see me to-morrow for a few minutes."

"This is sudden."

"I should say so. Madge hopes we won't be lonesome while she and Kittie are away."

"I don't think we will, if we're going to start after that treasure on Monday."

"That will be a little surprise I'll have to spring on her to-morrow when she calls at the office."

"One good turn deserves another," grinned Tom.

The boys then began to talk about their trip to the country thirty miles back of Plunketville, and to figure out what they needed to take with them.

"Suppose we find the cache, how are we to carry the gold away?" said Joe. "As there is supposed to be a good pile of it, it will weigh considerable."

"We can hire a horse and wagon, I imagine, at Plunketville to carry us to the ruin, and we'll load the gold on that."

"Maybe we wouldn't be able to get through the woods with it," said Tom. "The paper says we've got to pass through a wood before we get to the ruin."

"That's so. I guess it will be safer to hire a pair of horses or mules, with an extra one to help carry the treasure. We've got to carry three or four days' grub with us, anyhow, for I calculate it will use up a day riding there, another, say, on the spot, and a third in coming back."

"Will our funds stand the strain?"

"They'll have to. I've got \$125 saved up. How much have you?"

"None," said Tom.

"That's a start to see us through easily enough."

The boys continued to talk over their plans till they reached the time when they had everything packed up for the trip. Madge called at the office next day.

"Isn't it just provoking that I've got to go with

my uncle on that trip?" she said, when Joe came out from the job-room.

"It will be a nice trip for you. What are you kicking about?" replied Joe.

"Why, aren't you sorry to lose me?" she said, with a pout.

"Sure, I am, but seeing as Tom and I are going on a trip ourselves, we'd have to part for a while, anyway."

"Why, where are you two going?" asked the girl, in surprise.

"We're going on a hunting expedition."

"Hunting expedition—in summer?"

"Surest thing you know."

"What can you hunt at this season of the year?"

"Some people hunt for jobs at this season because work is so dull, but that isn't what we're going after."

"What, then?"

"Do you know what a cache is?"

"Cash is money, of course."

"I don't mean that kind of cash, though the one we're after has money in it. I mean a c-a-c-h-e," said Joe, spelling the word. "Generally speaking, a hole in the ground or place for hiding provisions and keeping them fresh. Old-time hunters and Arctic explorers adopted it for the purpose named. The cache Tom and I are going to look for is a buried treasure."

"How foolish! Where do you expect to find such a thing?"

"You leave that to us. I've got a dead line on it."

"I don't believe you're going away," said Madge. "You're just trying to fool me."

"All right, then we'll say no more about it. When do you start on your trip?"

"Saturday morning."

"Where are you going?"

"Somewhere out in the western part of this State, near a small town called Plunketville."

"Plunketville!" exclaimed Joe.

Madge nodded.

"Well, I'll be——"

"What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing," said Joe, recovering himself and thinking of the surprise he and Tom would treat the girls to if they met out there. "You're going to take Kittie with you?"

"Yes, for company, and because a maid is useful."

"Your uncle is going to visit an old friend of his, I think you wrote me?"

"Yes. He's got a ranch about twenty miles from Plunketville."

"You'll have all the horseback riding you want out there."

"Yes, that's the delightful part of it."

"Well, good-by, Madge. I've got to get back to work. Sorry I can't give you a kiss, but it will keep till we meet again."

"Haven't you got a cheek!" blushed the girl.

Joe laughed, and they shook hands and parted.

"What do you think, Tom," said Joe, as he and his friend were washing up at the trough at quitting time. "Madge and Kittie are going to a ranch near Plunketville."

"Get out! You don't mean it."

"That's what Madge told me to-day when she

called to say good-by. Wouldn't it be great if we met them out there?"

"What's to prevent us calling on them? Whose ranch is it?"

"I didn't think to ask her."

"Then you ought to be kicked. However, I guess we will be able to find out. They wouldn't be astonished to see us; of course not. Did you tell Miss Mason that we were going on a trip, too?"

"I did, but she didn't take me seriously."

"So much the better. We'll give the girls a surprise."

On Saturday when the foreman handed the boys their pay envelopes they astonished him by saying that they were going off for a week or longer.

"How do you know I can spare you?" said Buckley to Joe.

"I'm afraid you'll have to, as the trip is an important one for me."

"Is Bland going with you?"

"He is."

"Well, don't stay longer than a week."

"I can't guarantee that. It will depend on circumstances."

"Where are you going?"

"To the western part of the State."

"Going to see a relative?"

"No; I haven't any."

"Then you are taking a vacation?"

"That's about the size of it."

"I wish you luck, but I'll look to see you both back a week from Monday."

Joe and Tom spent the afternoon making their final preparations for their trip, and on Monday morning they took a train that would land them at Plunketville.

CHAPTER X.—The Boys Meet Madge.

The boys reached Plunketville Monday night and put up at the cheaper of the two hotels. They were in time to get supper, and after eating it they sallied forth to look the town over. It had expanded considerably since the Frenchman who made the cache of his gold died there. Then it was but an insignificant little village, standing in lonesome solitude on the banks of the muddy Missouri, and having little communication with the rest of the world. Now it was a big bustling town, with two banks, a semi-weekly newspaper, several blocks of business houses on the main street, and an opera house above a hardware store, not speaking of numerous other improvements. Other villages and towns had sprung up near it, and a trunk railroad had a station on the outskirts. The country round about which had been a wilderness in the Frenchman's time was now cut up into farms and ranches. Roads ran in many directions, and the country as a whole was now well populated. These facts the boys learned from the proprietor of the hotel.

"There's an old ruin, isn't there, about thirty miles to the northwest?" said Joe.

"Yes," said the landlord. "It is all that remains of a church and other buildings erected by the Frenchman who came to this country years ago. They settled in the State, which was not a State, or even a part of the Union, at that time,

but just an untrodden wilderness, for the purpose of converting the Indian nation which lived within the precinct of what is now Missouri. The venture was probably not a great success. At any rate, the ruins have been there for sixty or more years."

"Who does the property belong to now?"

"The Catholic Church claims it. It includes several square miles, covering the whole of a large wood on this side of the ruins, and a mile of woods beyond it. It is the one patch of wilderness in the State."

"It's a wonder it hasn't been sold to settlers."

"The Church is at loggerheads with the State over the title. Time and again the matter has been brought up in the courts, but no settlement has ever been reached. A year or two ago the Legislature took up the matter and settled it in favor of the Church, which has a big influence in politics, but the Governor vetoed the bill, which left matters as they were before. It is said that the difficulty is going to be compromised so that the land can be sold to farmers."

"We would like to go to those ruins. What is the easiest way of getting there?" asked Joe.

"The easiest way would be for you to go to Chester Village, twelve miles from here, and from there proceed by another road to Blackville, ten miles further on. From there a third road will take you to the wood, where it branches off. A bridle path goes through the wood, and that will bring you close to the ruins. It's a fair day's journey, horseback, though, and you are likely to meet nobody after you enter the woods except the charcoal burners, who are practically trespassers, though I never heard that they have been interfered with. I wouldn't advise you to go straight there from here, as you would arrive at the ruins so late in the afternoon that you'd either have to camp out there or ride back to Blackville after a short stay, and you couldn't make the village till after dark. The better way is to stop at Blackville over night and start from there next morning."

Joe thought the suggestion a good one and decided to adopt it. Next morning he and Tom hired two saddle horses, the third one to be secured at Blackville, which was only eight miles from the ruins. The fact that the country was so much more settled than they had figured on greatly simplified the plans they had formed, and did away with the necessity of their taking any provisions with them, except for the last stage of their trip to carry them over in case they found any difficulty in locating the cache. The boys had provided themselves with a small revolver each before leaving Corinth, but it seemed doubtful now if they would need any such protection. A village within eight miles of the ruins, did not seem to be any special risk before. Still, the charcoal burners might be as bad as a rough set, and if they ran foul of them on their way back with the gold, they might find the guns very useful.

The boys left Plunketville about ten next morning and reached Chester shortly after noon. They took dinner at the inn there and then proceeded to Blackville, where they arrived about five and put up for the night at the village hotel. The following morning they secured a horse and a pair of panniers. Providing themselves with a

stock of ham and tongue sandwiches, two pies and a half dozen bottles of soda water, they started for the woods, which they could see in the distance. The road was good and they went along at a swinging gait. They had covered half the distance to the wood when from a branch road a girl dashed toward them on horseback. She wore a rough-and-ready costume, the skirt being of ordinary length, and a kind of cowboy hat with a turkey feather in it. She could certainly ride like a house afire. She rapidly overhauled the boys.

"By George!" exclaimed Joe. "If that isn't Madge!"

"Hanged if it isn't," said Tom.

They reined in and waited for her to come up. When she got near she recognized them, and uttered a little scream of surprise.

"Why, boys," she cried, "what brings you here?"

"Didn't I tell you we were going on a hunting expedition?" said Joe.

"I thought you were fooling," she said. "I'm awfully glad to see you both. Kittie will have a fit when she learns you are here. Where are you stopping?"

"We're not stopping anywhere," replied Joe. "We've been on the move ever since we left Corinth."

"Where are you bound for now?"

"For an old deserted ruin on the other side of the wood yonder, about seven miles from here."

"Do you mean the church ruin? Mr. Morgan, at whose ranch we are visiting, was telling us about it last night. I should love to go there. Won't you take me with you?"

"I should be glad to do so, but we don't expect to come back right away."

"You mean that you're going further on?"

"No. We are going to do our hunting there, and there is no telling how long it will take us to find what we're after."

"Why, what are you going to hunt for?"

"I told you at the office that we were going to look for a cache."

"So you did, but I thought you were talking nonsense."

"No, there's no nonsense about it. We expect to find a buried treasure. Didn't you see that story in the Record about the Cache of Gold?"

"Yes, yes. It referred to the man who built the house we are occupying at Corinth."

"Exactly; and it spoke about a paper that gave the clue to it."

"Yes, I remember it did."

"Well, I've got that paper."

"You have?" she exclaimed.

"You remember the paper I found the night I hung outside the wall?"

"Yes."

"That's it. It was hidden in the wall, and the thunderbolt dislodged it from its hiding-place."

Madge was greatly surprised.

"Wouldn't that be fine if you found the money?" she cried. "And the ruin, you say, is only seven miles from here. Really, you must take me with you. I could come back alone. What's a seven-mile ride?"

"No, I wouldn't let you ride through that wood alone. I've been told that there are a number of

charcoal burners living in it, and they might hold you up."

"They wouldn't attack a girl like me," said Madge.

"I wouldn't trust them, for I dare say they are rough men. If you insist on going with us, we'll take you, but we'll see you through the wood if we fail to find the cache within a reasonable time."

The matter being arranged, the three rode forward in high spirits. Madge told them about Mr. Morgan's ranch, which was of considerable extent.

"If Kittie was able to ride, I'd have had her with me," she said.

"When you don't turn up for dinner, what will your uncle do?" asked Joe. "He will think some good-looking fellow has run off with you."

"What nonsense! He'll think I've lost my way, and will get Mr. Morgan to send one of his men after me."

"That won't do a whole lot of good, for he won't have any idea where you really are. He'd never think you went into the woods."

"Never mind, I'm bound to get back to the ranch some time," said Madge.

By this time they reached the edge of the woods where the road branched off. The bridle path the boys had been told about was plain enough, and taking it, they rode into the big stretch of woods which had been there for hundreds of years. It proved to be a perfect wilderness of trees, two or three miles across, and the sunlight penetrated it only in spots. Not a sound, other than that made by the feet of the four horses, broke the stillness of the place. Not a bird fluttered from branch to branch, nor an insect hummed in the warm summer air. Aside from the charcoal burners, whose proximity they had no knowledge of, there appeared to be no life, other than themselves, in that great wood. There was hardly any verdure on the ground, which, excepting the path, was thickly covered with dry leaves. The gloom and the silence somewhat affected the spirits of the young people.

"I don't think I'd care to pass through this place alone, after all," said the girl. "It's too lonesome. I'd imagine there was a tramp hidden behind every tree."

"You needn't be afraid while we're with you. Tom and I each have a revolver," said Joe reassuringly.

"You might need them to protect the gold if you find it," said Madge.

"That's why we bought them in Corinth before we set out."

They passed through several clearings on their way, in one of which stood the remains of a deserted hut. At length they came to a spot where another path, equally as clear as the one they had been following, joined it. They came to a halt while the boys deliberated as to which they ought to take. It was impossible to solve the problem, so Joe tossed a penny.

"Heads, we'll go to the right; tails, to the left," he said.

The coin turned up heads, and to the right they went. Fifteen minutes later they rode into a considerable clearing where half a dozen kilns

were smoldering in charge of a dark-featured, hang-dog-looking man.

CHAPTER XI.—Captured by Masked Men.

The charcoal burner eyed the three young people curiously. He did not offer to approach them, however. Joe decided to ask him for information.

"Say, mister, where does this path lead to?" he inquired.

"It leads further into the woods," replied the man grimly.

"Then we can't reach the old church ruin by following it?"

"Is that where you're bound?"

"Yes."

"You should have kept to the main path, then."

"We didn't see any difference between this and the other."

The man made no reply.

"We'll have to turn back," said Joe, guiding his horse around.

The other two followed his example.

"So you are goin' to the church ruin, are you?" said the charcoal burner.

"We are," answered Joe.

"What do you expect to see there?"

"We've heard a good deal about the ruins so we came over to see them."

"What have you got that other hoss for?"

"We're carrying our lunch on that."

"Oh, you are?" said the man, scratching his stubby chin and eyeing the pick and spade attached to the animal. "Got any whisky in them panniers?"

"No," replied Joe. "You're a charcoal burner, aren't you?"

"Looks like it, sonny, doesn't it?"

"How many charcoal burners are there in these woods?"

"Thar might be more or less," replied the man, with a solemn wink.

The fellow's manner indicated that he didn't feel like stating facts.

"Do you keep these fires burning all the time?"

"I reckon, except when they're out."

"You send your charcoal to Plunketville, I suppose?"

The man nodded.

"Let's get on," said Tom.

"Here's a quarter, mister, for setting us right," said Joe, tossing the man the coin.

He caught it without moving, looked at it, and dropped it in his pocket; then he watched the young people depart. The boys and their fair companion had gone about a hundred yards when a shrill whistle resounded through the woods from the direction of the kilns.

"What's that?" ejaculated Tom.

"A whistle. The fellow we just left made it, I guess," said Joe.

"I didn't like his looks."

"Neither did I. They're a tough lot, I judge, these charcoal burners."

"I hope we're not going to be molested."

"Why should we be?"

"That whistle sounded suspicious. He's probably calling some of his associates to tell them about us. He knows where we're bound. We may find them at the ruins waiting for us."

"Oh, I guess not. I don't think they'd dare attack us, for when we got back to the village we could make trouble for them. It wouldn't pay them to have their business interfered with or broken up."

They rode forward at a quick pace and by and by reached the junction of the two paths. They took the other one, and in the course of fifteen minutes came out of the wood into a large space, the size of a city block, thickly covered with brush and tangled vegetation, with a solitary tree here and there.

"That looks like the ruins yonder," said Joe, pointing straight ahead.

"I guess you're right," said Tom; "but from here it doesn't seem to amount to much."

They dashed forward and soon halted close to the only opening the straggling wall had in sight.

"We'll tie the horses here, and then we'll go in through that doorway. It is the one mentioned in the paper," said Joe.

The three horses were tethered to a tree and then they entered the ruin. There was very little of the original structure left. The stones lay about in all directions, singly and in piles. All the rest of the space, which had once been the interior of the building, was thickly obstructed with tall and rank grass.

"I'm afraid we're going to have something of a job making out the marks that we need to take the measurements," said Joe. "There's the tree which is the first one, and the point from which we must start. You've got the tape measure, Tom, get it out. Here is the pocket compass, which the man I bought it from guaranteed to work as exactly as a large instrument. Fetch that stone yonder while I beat down this grass."

Tom brought the flat stone and dropped it at the foot of the tree on the spot indicated by Joe.

Little Joe laid the compass on it.

"Here, take the end of the tape and walk slowly off in that direction," said Joe, pointing.

Tom obeyed orders.

"Halt!" cried Joe. "Do you see a stake near you? Look down in the grass. It may only be a few inches above the ground."

Tom looked around, pushing the grass aside, but didn't seem to find what was supposed to be there.

"Hold the tape here, will you, Madge, while I go and help Tom?" said Joe.

The girl, willing to make herself useful, took the boy's place and Joe hurried forward to where his friend was engaged.

"Don't seem to be any stake here," said Tom.

Joe pulled the grass up in chunks and tossed it aside, and crawled around on the ground over the space of a couple of square yards. It began to look as if they were stumped at the start, when Joe found the stake. It was almost rotted away. However, that didn't matter since they had found it, and proved to some extent that the directions on the paper had foundation in fact. Having accomplished the first lap, the second was to find another stake in another point of the compass. Another flat stone was procured and placed beside the rotten stake, and Tom started ahead again with the end of the tape. When Joe stopped him, he began the search for the second stake, and presently found it, and in much better

condition than the other. The third measurement was taken to a third stake, and that led them slap against a wall. The directions said follow wall to door on right and then measure to fourth stake.

"Go and get the spade, Tom, and we'll soon see if the gold is still there. At any rate, the ground doesn't look as if it had been disturbed for some years."

Tom hurried away to get the article.

"I guess I'll need the small pick we brought along, too," said Joe, after looking at the ground. "Run after Tom and tell him to fetch it, Madge."

The girl hastened to do his bidding. Left alone, Little Joe began pulling up the grass from the spot where the digging was to be done. While bent over, his eyes were attracted to some object not far away. He bent the grass down to look at it, and was surprised to find that it was a small, flat-looking bag. Laying hold of it, he found it was quite heavy. Lifting it up, he saw that it was apparently a money bag made of cloth, which, however, had rotted in places owing to long exposure in the grass. Out of one of the rotten places fell into his hand several pieces of the denomination of \$10.

"Gracious! Here is a bag of the gold that the prospector evidently dropped when he was here, and went away and left it on the ground. I judge there must be four or five thousand dollars in it. If the treasure is all in bags of this size, it won't be so difficult to handle. Well, this is something even if I fail to find any more. It will pay for coming here. But I feel confident that I shall find the rest of the money by digging for it. I tell you, it's better to be born lucky than rich," said Joe.

Just then he heard a noise behind him. Thinking it was Tom returning, he turned around and

saw what I found, Tom!"

Then he stopped and stared at the sight that met his eyes. A dozen roughly attired men, in masks that entirely covered their faces, with small, oval-looking holes for their eyes, were slowly advancing upon him. For a moment he stood against, seemingly unable to move; then as the men made a dash at him, he sprang for the nearest doorway, with the bag of gold clutched tightly against his chest. Darting through it, he looked for the outer doorway, with the bunch in his hand. Tom and Madge were returning after their hunt to the horses. The scene they were unexpectedly treated to quite staggered them. Joe appeared at the entrance, flushed and ex-

"Something is up!" exclaimed Tom.

Nothing surely was. The door was suddenly blocked by several men, one of whom seized Little Joe and started to drag him into the ruins. The boy struggled desperately. Finding escape impossible, he flung the bag of gold toward Tom and Madge.

CHAPTER XII.—Our Friends Nearly Escape.

As the bag of coin hurtled through the air, Little Joe was dragged out of sight. One of the masked men had appeared at the top of the wall and he ordered two of the crowd to seize Tom and the girl. Tom jumped in front of Madge and

downed one of the rascals with his spade, but the other fellow jumped in and laid hold of him. He put up such a fight that the leader of the bunch ordered two more of the masked rascals to take a hand in the capture, and in a minute or two Tom was helpless in the grip of two, while a third took Madge by the arm. The bag of gold lay unnoticed on the ground, having been forgotten in the fight. Tom and Madge were marched inside the ruins and taken into the inner part of it, where they found Little Joe guarded by a couple of men, while a third one was tying his hands behind his back. Tom was treated in the same way, and then the three were lined up before the man who appeared to be the leader of the gang.

"What brings you people to these ruins?" he demanded roughly.

"That's our business," replied Little Joe defiantly.

"It's our business, too, for we are the boss of this ranch. We've been watching you since you came, and the measurements you have taken clearly show that you have a clue to the Frenchman's gold. In fact, you have the long-missing paper which shows the exact spot in which it is buried. That paper I now have, and we will take care to make use of it. We have hunted a long time for that money without success. We did not think it was in such an open spot. At last, thanks to your coming, we shall be successful."

"Who are you chaps, anyway? You have no right to the contents of the cache. It belongs to me. If you rob me of the money, I'll see that you are hunted down and put in jail," said Joe.

"We shall take care to keep you close prisoners until we have secured the gold and are outside of the State with it. Then it will matter little to us what you may do. We are masked, as you see, and consequently it will be impossible for you ever to identify one of us, even if we were followed and caught, which is not likely to happen. We will let you have the pleasure of witnessing the digging up of the gold," said the leader.

He consulted the paper, and then gave orders for two of the men to fetch spades and dig at the indicated spot. The digging began at once, and the two rascals who took hold of the job made the dirt fly. At the end of fifteen minutes they were relieved by two others, and so the work went on with unflagging zeal and good speed. The chief watched the work with eyes that sparkled through his mask. The required depth was reached but with no results.

"Keep on," he cried impatiently.

Four feet downward was excavated and yet there was no sign of the buried gold. The leader then ordered the hole to be enlarged. This was done, but the result was the same.

"Dig a trench up to that stake," he ordered.

The trench was dug to the depth of over four feet, yet nothing turned up.

"Blame it! What does this mean? Can it be that the prospector carried away all of the gold?" he cried. "Yet that cannot be, for he came back for more. Some mistake has been made in the measurements."

The leader picked up the tape measure used by Joe and Tom and, taking one of the men outside with him, began the measuring all over again.

following the paper directions carefully. Joe, and incidentally Tom as well, were surprised that the rascally bunch failed to find the cache at the indicated spot. Apparently, had they not been interfered with, they would have had a lot of trouble without finding the object of their search. Joe began to think now that the prospector had got away with all the money. And yet if he had, why should he return to the ruins, as he evidently was doing at the time he was captured by what seemed to be the same gang as now held the upper hand of the young treasure seekers? That was something which could not be explained.

The results of the leader's measurements tallied with that made by the boys. The hole was still further enlarged, but with no success.

"I'm mighty glad that you fellows have done all that digging and saved us a lot of disappointing work," said Joe. "We both seem to be left on the treasure, and it's some satisfaction to know that we're not the only disappointed ones."

The leader glared at the boy.

"Take them to the vault and tie them to the rings in the walls," he ordered, fiercely.

The young people were walked into another section of the ruins, a trap door was opened and they were forced down a flight of stone steps into a gloomy underground room lighted by a lantern standing on a stone block. The roof was supported by pillars of some thickness. An iron ring was imbedded in several of them; for what purpose it was impossible to say, but possibly the missionaries who built the church found it necessary to imprison one or more Indians at times. Joe, Tom and Madge were tied each to a ring and left to their own reflections, which were not at all pleasant, as the reader will agree.

"This is mighty rough on us," said Little Joe, "and particularly on you, Madge. It is too bad that you insisted on coming with us."

"Well, we've got the revolvers yet, for they didn't search us," said Tom.

"What good are they to us in our present shape? Say, Madge, they didn't tie you very tight. See if you can't free yourself from that ring. If you can do it you could set us free, for I've a knife in my pocket with which you could cut the cords," said Joe.

Madge, who was keeping up bravely under the serious circumstances she found herself in, started to make an effort. She had not more than begun before the trap was lifted and a couple of the masked men came down. They brought a keg apiece forward, and seated themselves on either side of the stone block. One of them produced a pack of cards and they engaged in a game of poker. They played for the best part of an hour, and then they were called up by the leader. Once more Joe called on the girl to try and free herself.

"I suppose those chaps got that bag of gold I tossed to you?" said Joe to Tom.

"I couldn't tell you; but where did you find it?" asked his friend.

Joe explained how he got hold of it.

"There must be four or five thousand dollars worth of ten dollar gold pieces. Since we've missed the treasure that would come in very handy for us; but I guess it's lost to us now."

"How are you coming out, Madge?" asked Joe.

"Not very well," she replied. "The knot won't come untied."

"Keep at it. Everything depends on you."

The boys talked while Madge worked at the knot.

"It's beginning to give," she said at last.

In a little while Madge triumphed over the knot, and freed herself from the ring.

"Now, then, put your hand in my right pocket and you'll find my knife," said Joe.

It only took the girl a moment to pull out the knife. With it she speedily cut the boys free, not only from the rings but from the bonds which held their hands behind them.

"Now, how are we going to escape from this place?" asked Tom.

"Through the trap, of course," said Joe.

He led the way up the steps, but just as he raised his arm to push up the trap it was opened in his face and a masked man started to come down.

CHAPTER XIII.—The Explosion.

The fellow saw the prisoners who had freed themselves and uttered a shout. Then he drew a revolver, but before he could point it at the boy Joe fired at him. He staggered back and fell into the grass. The man's shouts, coupled with the report of the revolver, brought a bunch of the men to the spot and Joe saw that it would be impossible for them to make their escape, so he backed down the steps, and with Tom, prepared to keep the ruffians at bay.

The rascals were surprised to find the boys armed, and blamed their stupidity in not searching them. They slammed the trap-door down and rolled a stone on it.

"What are we going to do now?" asked Tom.

"Look around and see if there's any other way out," said Joe.

They discovered a tunnel leading off somewhere and Joe, who felt it necessary to watch the trap-door, told Tom to investigate it. Tom did so, but had not proceeded far into it before he heard voices of men approaching and he judged that the rascals intended to attack them that way. He ran back and warned Joe.

Joe seized the lamp to place it where its light would shine on the opening of the tunnel. As he did so he saw a small barrel standing against the wall marked "Powder—dangerous."

To lay hold of it and roll it toward the entrance of the tunnel was the work of a moment. Joe, with his iron nerve, battered the head in with the butt of his revolver. Then he rolled the keg into the tunnel and hastily laid a train from it into the vault. Not hearing any further sounds from the rascals, Joe crept forward to investigate. He ran against one of the men who was in advance. The fellow grabbed Joe, but the boy managed to wriggle free. He darted back into the vault, struck a match and ignited the powder train.

The fire darted along the ground like a sputtering serpent. Before the rascals could surmise what was coming a tremendous explosion shook the ruins and the earth around it. The whole bunch were blown out of existence, and the

young people in the vault stunned into unconsciousness. The tunnel was completely blocked up with fallen earth and stones, and a great hole was made in the ground above. Only four of the gang had been sent in through the tunnel to capture the girl and the two boys. The rest, with the leader, were in the open air. The explosion took them by surprise, and they were thrown into a kind of panic. The leader, however, remembered about the keg of powder which had been stowed away in the vault, and he believed that in some way that had exploded. Calling one of his companions he ran to the trap door and threw it open. The fumes and smoke of burnt powder came rolling out.

"I don't understand this," he said to his men, who had come up and were gathered around the trap-door. "That was evidently the powder keg that went off. But why should it blow a hole yonder instead of in the vault where it was standing? The whole roof of the vault ought naturally to have fallen in, instead of which it doesn't appear to be injured at all. That hole is in the tunnel."

The men stared at him but said nothing, while they watched the decreasing smoke as it rose out of the open trap. They waited till the worst of the smell had dispersed and then the leader, accompanied by several of his men, went down. They found the two boys and the girl stretched out just as they had fallen.

"They're goners," said one of the rascals.

The leader examined the supposed corpses but found that they were not dead by a good deal. He ordered them to be removed to the outer air, and they were carried up into the afternoon sunshine and laid on the grass. The leader then made an examination of the vault and tunnel. The vault itself appeared to have suffered no particular injury. The leader saw that the powder keg had been moved from the place where it had been kept and placed in the tunnel. As his men wouldn't do that, he judged that the prisoners must have done it in a desperate attempt to open a route to freedom. While the young people lay unconscious in the open air one of the rascals took possession of the revolvers on the boys, and also the \$100 that Little Joe had on his person. Joe looked as if he had caught the worst of the explosion, for his face was much blackened by powder smoke, and so the leader guessed he was the one who set the powder off.

"That chap must have an iron nerve to do such a thing," muttered the leader, as he looked at Joe. "And he's only a little fellow, too. I don't see how he escaped at all. The other two were probably at the extreme back of the vault, and were not shocked so much. If we hadn't been on hand to open the trap and let the powder fumes out at once, the three would have been suffocated."

After the lapse of an hour Tom and Madge came to their senses and found themselves surrounded by the gang. The leader questioned Tom about the explosion, but got little satisfaction from him. He finally admitted that Joe had rolled the powder keg into the tunnel when they heard men approaching the vault through the tunnel, and had set it off by means of a train of powder he had laid into the vault. He said

he remembered nothing except seeing a bright flash and feeling as if he had been hurled into space. The men were hungry, having missed their dinners, and so the chief ordered Joe to be carried down into the vault and left there. Madge and Tom were ordered to go down themselves.

Tom walked down much against his will, but there was no help for it, and Madge followed him. The trap was closed upon them and a heavy stone placed upon it. Satisfied that their prisoners were secure the gang removed their masks, hid them in a certain spot, and then started for the woods.

CHAPTER XIV.—Little Joe's Big Bonanza.

Madge was much concerned over Little Joe. His continued unconsciousness alarmed her, and she was afraid he might die without regaining his senses. Tom looked around, and found a jar of water with a cup in a corner. He also found part of a bottle of whisky. Madge bathed Joe's face with the water, and Tom poured some of the whisky down his throat. Their ministrations proved efficacious, and Joe opened his eyes and saw Madge bending over him.

"How do you feel, Joe?" she asked anxiously.

"Feel! What's the matter with me?"

"Why, don't you remember about the explosion?" asked Tom.

"What explosion?"

"The keg of powder you set off in the tunnel."

"So, the explosion knocked me out, eh?"

"Yes, and it knocked Madge and me silly, too," said Tom.

"Did it?"

"Yes. When we came to we found ourselves out in the open air, and you lying on the grass beside us."

"How did we get there?"

"Those rascals came down here after the explosion and carried us out."

"They did; but we're in the vault now."

"They put us back here."

"Well, they seem to have us dead to rights, and blowing up the tunnel didn't do us any good. Some of those rascals must have been killed or badly hurt," said Joe.

"Four of them are buried in the dirt of the tunnel."

"By George!" exclaimed Joe, feeling in his pockets, "those rascals have got away with our money, Tom. That puts us in a hole."

"I'll get my uncle to lend you enough money to take you back to Corinth," said Madge.

"I wonder what they're doing now."

"Heard them talking about being hungry. And that reminds me that I'm hungry as thunder."

"So am I, and Madge must be also. None of us has had anything to eat since breakfast. That provender we brought from Blackville would taste mighty good now. I suppose that gang has got away with it all."

Tom and Madge followed him into the tunnel. They didn't have far to go before they found evidences of the blow up. Little Joe planked himself near the side of the tunnel, as close to the roof as he could go, and spreading his legs apart began throwing the loose dirt between them, the stuff falling behind him in a shower.

Suddenly a part of the wall gave way beside him, and buried him up to the middle, and a heavy round object rolled out in front of him. Joe pushed it away, thinking it was a stone, and it rolled down in front of Madge, who saw it was a bag full of something.

Madge stooped and picked it up.

"My, but it's heavy. Joe, look, this is a bag of money," she said.

Madge reached it to him.

He held it in the hole from which the earth had caved, and there he beheld a score of similar bags stacked up in the excavation.

"Hurrah! The cache of gold at last. I've found a big bonanza!" he cried, exultantly.

CHAPTER XV.—Conclusion.

Tom clambered beside him to take a look. He speedily saw that Joe had made no mistake about it—the gold was there. It took about fifteen minutes to free Little Joe.

"We must cover the bags up till we get out," said Joe. "Hand up the one you have, Madge."

He replaced it in the spot from which it had fallen, but in doing so he dislodged more dirt and another cave-in took place higher up, disclosing the light of day. The second dirt slide nearly hid the bags of gold.

"There's a hole," cried Joe. "We'll be out of this prison in fifteen minutes."

He began clearing the dirt away as fast as he could work, and soon widened the opening so that he could thrust his head up through it. Not a soul was in sight. He pulled himself out.

"Wait down there, you folks, till I investigate the situation," he said.

He walked into the third section where the trap-door was, rolled the stone off it and opened it. Then he shouted for Tom and Madge to come up that way. They lost no time in doing so. Joe led the way into the second section where the digging had been done in vain for the treasure, and from there into the first one where the outer door was. Looking out they saw no one in sight.

"Why there are our horses," said Tom. "The rascals never took them away."

The three made a rush for the tree where the animals were tied, and Joe thrust his hand into one of the panniers. Nothing had been touched. So they went back and got the bags from the tunnel and fastened them on the extra horse and started. They had not a great way to go to reach the woods, and soon struck the bridge path that led through to the road connecting with Blackville. It happened that at the very moment they disappeared among the trees several of the charcoal burners started for the ruins with some food for the prisoners. The reader can imagine their surprise when they found the trap door open and prisoners gone.

They hurried back to tell the chief of the gang, but by the time they had told their story the young people were already a mile on their way through the woods. The leader of the gang, never dreaming what a rich prize was slipping through his hands, decided not to organize any pursuit of the prisoners. And so the three young people pushed ahead unmolested with the money

from the cache of gold—Little Joe's big bonanza—in their possession.

Every moment while they were in the woods passed in a fever of apprehension lest they might encounter the masked ruffians. Nothing like that happened, and in due time they issued from the woods on to the road and with a feeling of intense relief turned their faces toward Blackville.

"I guess we're pretty safe now," said Joe.

"Yes. I'm willing to gamble on that," replied Tom.

"We'll stop at the inn to-night and go to Plunketville in the morning," said Joe.

"Why not come with me to Mr. Morgan's ranch?" said Madge. "I'll guarantee you will be welcomed. He will furnish you with better means for carrying the money to Plunketville."

"All right," said Joe. "We'll go. With so much money in our possession I dare say we would be welcome anywhere."

So when they reached the branch road, where they met Madge that morning, they turned into it, and after a ride of a little over a mile reached the ranch. Madge's all day absence had thrown Captain Peck into a fever of anxiety. Captain Peck rushed over and grabbed his niece in his arms, asking her where she had been so long.

"I've been with Joe Hooker and Tom Bland," she replied.

Then the captain took notice of the boys and his surprise was complete. Kittie was tickled to death to see Tom, and the feeling was reciprocated. The boys were introduced to the ranch owner, and he extended the hospitality of the ranch to them. When they showed the twenty-five bags of gold coin, the contents of the cache of gold, which everybody in that vicinity had heard about, both the ranch owner and Captain Peck were paralyzed with astonishment.

Joe told the story of their strenuous experience with the masked band, and all agreed that the adventure was a rough one, though it had turned out most satisfactory in the end. The captain thought that Joe had taken the most desperate kind of chances in exploding the keg of gunpowder in such a place, and said it was a miracle they had not all three lost their lives. The boys remained several days at the ranch, having a good time with the girls, and then Mr. Morgan took them and the treasure to Plunketville in his light wagon.

The money had been boxed, ready to be shipped by express to Corinth, and the train that carried it also took the boys, too, so that both reached the town at the same time. The money was deposited in the head bank and after it was counted the cashier paid Joe over the sum of \$125,000 in bills. One-third of that Joe presented to his friend Tom, according to his agreement.

Neither of the boys returned to the job room of the Record office, but under the guidance of Captain Peck loaned their money on bond and mortgage, and with a part of their capital went into business together. Eventually Joe married Madge and Tom made Kittie his wife, and both became successful business men on the fruits of little Joe's big bonanza.

Next week's issue will contain "TOO LUCKY TO LOSE OR, A BOY WITH A WINNING STREAK."

CURRENT NEWS

SHE DID NOT SPIT OUT MOTH BALLS

Fearing she might be arrested for spitting on the street, Mrs. Agnes Gibson of Kalamazoo, Mich., walked all the way home, suffering great pain, with moth balls, which she had mistakenly purchased for candy, in her mouth. The woman became violently ill from the poison she had swallowed, but physicians announced she will recover.

NEGRO WOMAN MADE RICH BY FINDING OF OLD DEED

To be raised from comparative poverty to sudden wealth is the experience of Mrs. Mary A. Barney, colored, of No. 3 Jaggar avenue, Flushing, N. Y. She has just obtained possession of valuable property through the discovery of a deed dated Nov. 21, 1848, which had been misplaced for twenty years.

The deed conveyed the property to Mrs. Barney's grandfather, Daniel Bayman, but because of the disappearance of the papers and the failure to record the deed at the time, the ownership could not be legally established. The deed was recently found among some old papers and gives Mrs. Barney full possession of sixteen acres of property at Oyster Bay overlooking the Sound. The present valuation of the property is said to run well into five figures.

A LIZARD AS BIG AS A CROCODILE

A very interesting creature is the giant lizard of Africa, sometimes called the monitor lizard, which grows to a length of more than five feet. Its appearance is that of a slenderly built crocodile, and it is very active, especially in the use of its powerful tail, which it uses as a weapon. With one slap of his tail it will instantly kill a full-grown chicken, and it occasionally strikes a human being. This reptile is an inveterate chicken thief, and has a method of waylaying fowls in the woods and grass, where they always manage to get a little more than their share. With such bon vivant habits, the flesh of this lizard is naturally very good eating, and I myself have partaken of it.—R. L. Garner, in the Century Magazine.

HONOR FOR A DOG

A silver collar for "Hero," the dog which made possible the rescue of 92 survivors of a ship wrecked off the Newfoundland coast last December, was sent recently by the staff of The Starry Cross, the organ of a number of humane societies of Philadelphia, Pa. The collar will be on exhibit in the town hall of Bonne Bay, Newfoundland, the home of Reuben Decker, "Hero's" master. The presentation will be made by Rev. W. B. Brennan, a missionary, who certified the facts of the remarkable rescue.

The coastal steamer *Little* went aground on Dec. 10, 1919, and the 92 passengers, including a new-born infant, were in immediate danger of death in the heavy sea. Efforts to shoot a line to the shore failed, and no boat nor swimmer could make headway in the raging sea. The shore was

lined with residents of Bonne Bay, who realized their helplessness.

As night grew near, Mr. Decker summoned his dog and ordered him to take a rope in his mouth and swim to the wrecked ship to establish communication. The dog plunged into the heavy waves, his teeth clenched on the cable, and after more than an hour's swim reached the stricken steamer. The dog and line were hauled aboard, the cable was attached to a mast, a breeches buoy was hung on the cable and every passenger was saved. The new infant was sent shoreward in a mail bag.

MAKES FAST TIME ACROSS CONTINENT

The world's record for a coast-to-coast trip by motor truck was established on Sunday, June 20, at 11.15 p. m., when a three ton truck equipped with pneumatic tires arrived in New York from Los Angeles, Cal., having made the entire distance (of 3,451 miles) in 13 days, 13 hours and 15 minutes.

This remarkable trip demonstrates the long distance hauling possibilities of motor trucks equipped with pneumatic tires. The previous record made in 1918 for a coast-to-coast trip stood at 17 days and 3 hours. The entire trip was made on one set of pneumatic tires without change.

One of the most interesting things about the record is the fact that it was made by a truck which was not especially constructed for the test. This truck already had rolled up a mileage of over 120,000 miles. It was originally planned to make the trip from Los Angeles to Akron, Ohio, but when the truck reached Akron, it had made such good time that it was decided to send it on to New York for a coast-to-coast record.

Even with the low time made, smooth running was not experienced all the way. At Seligman, Ariz., nearly four hours were lost while a tunnel was made about 30 feet long and 1 foot deep in hard pan to enable the truck to go under the Santa Fe railway. This was necessary on account of the extreme height of the body, which made it impossible to go under the tracks without digging a trench for the tires to run in.

Outside of Albuquerque, N. M., high water of the Rio Grande necessitated considerable detouring, culminating in the breaking of a bridge over an irrigation ditch, which made it necessary to use 32 hours of time to travel 34 miles.

In New Mexico almost impassable roads were encountered near Wagon Mound, where tourists advised the truck drivers not to attempt to get through. This condition of roads was brought about by continuous rain, which made a very muddy and slippery driving surface.

The truck was equipped with 44x10 pneumatic tires on the rear and 38x7 pneumatic tires in front. An extra set of tires both front and rear were carried, but were not needed. Other equipment included 150 gallons of gasoline, 30 gallons of oil, log chains, planks, axes, shovels, etc.

The truck left Los Angeles, Cal., on June 7 at 10 a. m. and reached New York, June 20, 11.15 p. m.

Lost On Mt. Erebus

— OR —

A Boy Explorer At the South Pole

By GASTON GARNE

(A Serial Story)

CHAPTER X (continued)

At the same instant their feet touched a shelf beneath. Joe hung to the rope, swung the half-fainting girl inward, and followed himself as the rope grew taut about his waist.

"Hold to the rock," he adjured her. "I don't know what we have struck here, but I want to loosen this rope from around my waist."

While he composedly did this the girl, glancing outward, saw below a vast chasm some two or three hundred yards deep and more than half a mile wide. It was filled with the rising clouds of steam, below which were three well-like openings. These were in a terrible red glow, suggestive of the infernal regions. From this came fumes of burning sulphur.

At times the gale above would sweep away the steam, and while poor Madge was looking, one of these clearing puffs showed her the vast extent and depth of this fearful abyss.

The fumes almost choked her to insensibility, but Hawley held her firmly. She felt that he was crawling—not up—but inward, under the overhanging lip. Once he put her down.

"Don't, Joe!" she gasped. "I think I'm dying. Save yourself," she added. "Don't mind me——"

"Now wouldn't I be in a sweet fix way up here all by my lonesome?" he cheerily remonstrated, picking her up again. "At least it is warm under here, and when you've revived a bit we'll try again."

Madge felt his warm, strong clasp, and every few steps came his cheerful, hearty tones, encouraging her to keep up her courage. The effect was wonderful. She really believed in Joe.

"You are right," said she. "I won't give up as long as you see a chance for us—there, now."

They had struggled upward along a divided seam where the very stones were at first unbearably hot. The fumes and vapors were like suffocating gags on their respiratory organs.

More than once Madge faltered, but Hawley continued to say:

"No, we won't. I see light ahead. Don't give up. There's a good girl. Never say die." And the like.

Where they were going she did not know. For that matter, neither did Hawley. It was the only chance from what looked like certain death. He took it; she followed his lead.

Although Joe kept his eyes watchfully about their course, he could only feel certain of two things.

Their general course was gradually upward, and the heat and fumes from the crater were growing less as they progressed.

At length it seemed to him as if they were turning more and more to the right. Would

this again bring them out upon some shelf further along but overhanging that dreadful abyss, which they now both knew for the active crater of Erebus?

"In this zone of cold we ought to be grateful for some sign of heat, eh, Madge?" This he propounded jokingly.

"Ye-yes, I suppose so. But everything runs to extremes here. For weeks we almost freeze; then suddenly we almost drop into a pit where our roasting would hardly be noticed, except by us. Where are we now, Joe?"

"We're coming out all right, I think. Lucky I took our time and altitude when we first got here. Hullo! Here is where our light came from. Isn't that snow out there?"

"I do believe it is. Look down, Joe. What is that red streak yonder in the floor of this passage?"

It was well that the girl, mostly looking downward, saw a reddish strip that crossed the seam directly ahead.

The dead lava about them was black; but Joe, stepping cautiously on, suddenly drew back, pressing the girl backward also.

"It's a gap in the strata. Phew! Smell the hot sulphur!"

Beyond this they could see a wide opening, through which came unmistakable glimpses of ice and snow beyond.

"Well, it is not that old crater," sighed Madge, in relief. "I really begin to feel as if I liked the sight and feel of a glacier, after all this underground flight with suffocation and heat."

"Right you are, Madge. And if I am right with my compass, this opening is on the south side of the mountain. We ascended on the opposite side. Stay here while I crawl up and look into this red gap that bars us from yonder outlet into the open world."

He laid down his pack and crawled cautiously toward the edge.

"Do be careful, Joe. That edge may give way. Here! I'm going to hold your foot."

While Hawley wriggled along, Madge seized one foot and held determinedly, despite Joe's urging her to give him more freedom.

"No, I won't. What would become of me if you did tumble down into that crevice? I'll hold on, if I go with you—so there!"

The fumes rising up were more and more stifling as Joe finally looked over. Madge heard him gasp for breath.

Then she dragged him back by main strength. He was half insensible, and for a moment could hardly speak.

"It's—it's all on fire underneath here," he wheezed forth at length. "But as you pulled me back I saw a lead to the left. If we can walk that way, we may go round this gap, which is a narrowing heat crack in the wall of the crater. On the other side we can reach the open air."

"Must we try it?" she asked nervously. "Can't we go back and find some other way out?"

"There is a ledge a foot or two wide to the left. After that, I saw that it widened out in a shelf that surrounds the head of this gap. No; we can't go back—safely. Trust me, Madge. I will find our way out. See if I don't."

(To be continued)

THE NEWS IN SHORT ARTICLES.

HIGH COST OF WAR

The cost of war has gone up even more rapidly than the cost of living. To win our independence cost us \$18.88 per capita. The War of 1812 took only \$14.64 from the pocket of each citizen. The scrap with Mexico cost a mere \$2.48 per capita; the Civil War raised it to \$81.58 per capita, while the World War, though the United States was in it a shorter time than its participation in previous wars, cost us \$286 per capita.

The cost of war for the United States rose from \$76,000,000 for the Revolution to \$18,000,000,000 for the World War.

SHIRT NEARLY FATAL NOOSE

Wright Robinson, high school student, son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles W. Robinson of Seaford, Del., had a narrow escape from strangling to death while performing on the horizontal bars in the gymnasium of the Seaford school.

He was practising the muscle grinding feat on the bars and in making the revolutions his shirt became caught in the bars and wound around his neck. He was making the revolutions so fast that it was impossible for him to stop himself and was slowly strangling to death, when William C. Moore happened to be passing the school and saw the unfortunate boy's perilous condition. He ran to his assistance and succeeded in releasing him from the bars, saving the boy's life.

BABOONS AND AN AIRPLANE

Writing of the passing of an Aero biplane over Uitenhage en route to Port Elizabeth, a South African newspaper has the following to say: "Mr. Norman Chase relates a peculiar experience he had in connection with the plane. He was bathing at Kamaehs, when he noticed a number of baboons which were in the vicinity showing unmistakable signs of fear. They crowded together and whimpered, giving every indication that something unusual had disturbed them. Mr. Chase's dog, a well-bred Airedale, and known to be plucky and fearless, also became uneasy, and appeared to be in dread of something. On looking around for the cause of all the trouble, Mr. Chase observed the airplane flying overhead at a comparatively low altitude. The sound of the engine and the huge birdlike appearance of the plane no doubt upset the equilibrium of the baboons."

UNIVERSITY TEACHES GIRL STUDENTS TO PRODUCE CHEAP MEALS

Young Women students in the home economics department at the University of Texas are learning how to cut the cost of feeding a family. At the beginning the prime thing is to get a meal, but toward the finish of the course the young woman has also to turn out the finished product cheaply.

The university expects its young experts to cut about half off the cost of a lunch by switching desserts and leaving off biscuits. Here is a sample of its before and after college menus:

For 45 cents a plate of four persons: Salmon croquettes, mashed potatoes, iced tea, tomato salad, biscuit, strawberries and ice cream.

For 24 cents a plate for four persons, toward the end of the course: Creamed tuna fish on toast, French fried potatoes, apple and celery salad, hot tea, lemon pie.

THRIFTY CHINESE TURN PEACHSTONES INTO FUEL

Numerous things which peoples of other nations do not hold as worthy of consideration are being turned into good use by the Chinese. For instance, their ingeniousness in utilizing things of no value whatsoever is shown by scavengers who collect peach stones in the street. Children and women are to be seen in the markets picking up and treasuring the peach stones. In the months of May, June and July the women and children of the poorer class appear in groups carrying baskets home when filled.

These peach stones have several uses. Broken into pieces and dried in the sun they furnish good fuel. The kernel, which has a good market value, is sold to the druggists for making medicine.

Another profitable use of the peach stones is to sell them to native artists or engravers who carve them into different forms of animals. Some of the larger stones, however, if round enough, are carved into the fine finger rings, which cost between 20 and 30 cents each. Out of one full basket of peach stones ten or fifteen can be selected as suitable for engravers and they will be sold at a cent each, thus turning the waste materials into a good profit.

During the season one may see in the interior of South China the hut-yards of poor people full of peach stones drying in the sun. After having cleaned them groups of small girls and boys pick out the big stones. The smaller ones are broken up and used for fuel when the kernel has been taken out. Sometimes the kernels are sold to chemists or druggists. They are preserved in bottles and used as a cough medicine after the kernels are turned into white powder. In many small villages this white powder is a very cheap cough remedy.

Another waste material put to use by Chinese in different towns of each province are oyster shells. They are in great demand for the manufacture of Chinese lime. One "picul" of such shells (about 133 pounds) costs about 60 cents.

In many towns where there are many Chinese restaurants scavengers pack oyster shells in bamboo cases. In a front corner of Chinese houses in villages, especially those near coast cities, big baskets are put by scavengers as refuse boxes. When full, they pick out shells and even broken pottery ware, for everything has a market value in China.

The broken bowls and cracked pottery ware are broken into small particles and afterward sold to masons for making foundations of strong walls.

THE INDIAN RAID

By Paul Braddon.

In 1867 the Kansas Pacific Railroad came to an abrupt ending near Fort Wallace, Kansas, in the midst of an arid desert, barren of trees, utterly hopeless as an agricultural proposition, and the most disheartening terminus to a great railroad imaginable.

The sporadic eruption of shanties, "dug-outs," canvas and "balloon homes," which broke out in the immediate vicinity we dignified by the title of Phil Sheridan.

Murders were frequent, and the traditional programme of "a man for breakfast" was carried out with startling regularity; at least until the "Vigilantes" organized; after which Whisky Bill, Texas Jack, or any of the numerous desperadoes who honored us with their presence, felt called upon to "whoop up the town."

The Vigilantes' leader was very decidedly in favor of hanging all culprits; therefore "a notice to git" from him generally ended the matter, for when it was disobeyed the man was hanged.

In justifying this action the man was in the habit of saying "that he did not own a prison, and as no one would pay the criminal's fare to Kansas City, where he could be locked up in accordance with the usages of civilization, the next best thing was to hang him or let him go," and it was not to be expected, after the trouble they had taken to capture him, that the latter course would be adopted.

In addition to this unpleasant state of affairs, the Cheyenne Indians labored under the impression that we had no business to build a railroad through that section of the country, and emphasized that sentiment by scalping and torturing to death any unfortunate stragglers they could lay their hands on.

Being well mounted, too, they generally defied all attempts at retaliation.

True, after each serious raid the soldiers at Fort Wallace were ordered out, but by the time they had "got a good ready," the Indians had invariably made good their escape with such property as they could carry off with them.

Like all misfortunes, these raids always came when least expected, and such an episode I witnessed the second morning after my arrival in Sheridan.

The evening before an eighty-mule train arrived from Santa Fe, and camped at the lower end of the town.

The owner, Don Plasquito, a wary old Mexican and experienced plainsman, had throughout his long trip carefully hobbled and picketed his mules every night, and invariably posted strong guards, but as his ill-fortune would have it, a prominent saloon-keeper in "Rat Row" gave his weekly fandango that night, and of course every one of Plasquito's train attended it, leaving a solitary peon to watch the mules, which, freed from the irritating hobbles and picket ropes, fed in peace.

The fandango lasted—as usual—all night, and wound up near daybreak with a desperate fight, in which, from the yells, all hands seemed to be engaged.

Jake's saloon was immediately in the rear of the shanty, which was at once my office and my residence, and fearful that a stray bullet might deprive the company of a valuable employee, I hurried on my clothes and lost no time in getting out of range.

Day was beginning to break as I stepped out of the shanty, and the cold gray light made the shabby collection of shanties and dirty tents even more shabby, and feeling disheartened and generally very blue, I walked down the hill to a small trestlework bridge spanning a deep gulf a few hundred feet from the freight office.

Below me I could see Plasquito's mules, some nibbling at the sparse grass, others lying down, and upon a small bluff above them the smoldering "buffalo-chip" fire of the solitary herder. The undulating lines of the barren prairie and dreary expanse of the "alkali flat" had gradually become clearer, the prairie owls piped their plaintive minor notes less frequently, and the coyotes had howled their last day break chorus when I caught sight of three men leisurely riding up from the creek towards the struggling herd of mules.

Supposing them to be some of Plasquito's Mexicans coming out to relieve guard, I did not at first pay any attention to them, further than to notice that all three wore army overcoats. But as these were often worn by the "bull and mule whackers," my suspicions were not aroused. But as they approached the mules a series of quick, sharp snorts told of something wrong. Instantly the herder sprang to his feet, crying: "Los Indios—los Indios!" and started at the top of his speed toward the wagons.

The foremost horseman wheeled his mustang short round, rushed him at the ten-foot-wide gully which seamed the earth between him and the flying Mexican, cleared it like a steeple-chaser, and before the unfortunate peon could reach the front of the bluff, fired one quick shot, at which the man fell, apparently lifeless.

Then, without checking his wiry little mustang, the horseman stooped over as he dashed past the prostrate man, dragging him a few yards by his hair, and then, with a yell, dropped him and galloped on after the other two, who, swinging their red blankets over their heads, screeching in harsh, broken falsetto voices, stampeded the mules up the gulch.

The whole affair was done so quickly that I had not time to get off the bridge before the terror-stricken mules came rushing up the embankment opposite me, not more than sixty yards distant, and following the old bell-mule, raced off up the line, with the three men whom I could now plainly see were Indians in full war-paint close at their heels. Having nothing more dangerous than an expired railroad pass in my pocket, I took to my heels and ran, yelling—"Indians—Indians!" at every step.

The inhabitants of a crowded house turn out with astonishing promptness at the alarm of fire, but their movements are slow in comparison of those of Sheridan's population upon this particular occasion, and within a very few moments a strong party was ready for pursuit.

Not having a horse, I ran with other horseless citizens to the summit of a high bluff near the town, and watched the chase. As we breath-

lessly reached the top, the stampeding mules could be plainly seen going at a racing gait, like a herd of rabbits, but instead of three Indians, fully two hundred mounted warriors were now leisurely following them.

Undeniably the opportunity to distinguish myself was one that might never occur again.

But as I looked at the body of the herder, instantly killed by a shot through the head—I realized the accuracy of the hand which fired the shot, and remembered the dexterous horsemanship which its owner had displayed in picking up and scalping the unfortunate peon without checking the gallop of his swift mustang, and having no ambition to shine as a scout or Indian-slayer, the peaceful termination of the affair, as far as I was concerned, was entirely satisfactory.

DIES SHOOTING NIAGARA FALLS IN BIG BARREL

Charles G. Stephens, of Bristol, England, was killed at Niagara Falls, N. Y., July 11, when he went over the Horseshoe Falls in a barrel. The cask in which he made the trip, though built of stout Russian oak staves and bound with steel hoops, smashed like an eggshell on the jagged rocks, but Stephens's body has not been recovered. River men say that it may not come to the surface for a week or ten days.

Stephens, who boasted the title of "dare-devil," was fifty-eight years old and had a wife and eleven children in Bristol, where he was a barber. He served three years in France with the British army. He had planned to make a lecture tour of England if his trip was successful.

Bobby Leach, who went over the Horseshoe Falls in 1911, told Stephens before he started that his trip would be a failure. Leach predicted that the barrel would not withstand the drop of 155 feet, but Stephens refused to be dissuaded from the venture. Leach was among the spectators who watched the start of Stephens's fatal trip.

Few knew that Stephens was to make the trip to-day, and when the barrel was towed out into the river on the Canadian side, two miles above the falls, there were only a dozen on hand to watch. It was 8:10 o'clock when Stephens was cast adrift. Early sightseers on Goat Island saw the barrel bobbing up and down in the tumbling rapids of the upper rapids, but none knew that it carried a man about to defy the cataract.

Members of Stephens's party followed the cask down stream in automobiles. In one of the cars a moving picture operator filmed the progress of the barrel. As the barrel drew near the brink of the falls it seemed to stand on end, hesitate a second or two and then slide gracefully over the slope, head foremost, and at a slight angle. Its gleaming black and white stripes could be seen until it had fallen about half way down the face of the cataract. Then it was lost to view in the misty spray.

Men stationed below the fall on the Canadian shore watched the barrel as it fell and prepared to catch it if it floated into the eddy above the Canadian Maid of the Mist landing. It was there that the barrels in which Leach and Mrs. Annie

Edison Taylor made the falls trip in former years had been recovered.

A quarter of an hour passed, then a half hour, and an hour. Field glasses trained on the boiling waters at the base of the cataract revealed no sign of the cask. When the hour had passed the old rivermen in the little group of watchers began to shake their heads dubiously. They remembered that Mrs. Taylor had made the trip in forty-nine minutes and that Bobby Leach was on his way to the loop of the bank in thirty-nine minutes after his barrel had been sent adrift above the falls.

Word that Stephens had tried and failed spread quickly through the two falls cities and great crowds congregated on the banks of the river. Men and women stood packed on the upper steel arch bridge, at Prospect Point and along the Canadian and American shores. It was shortly after noon, four hours after Stephens began his trip, when some one caught sight of a black object in the river near the base of the falls.

"There he is!" a watcher cried, and there was a brief interval of hope that Stephens might have survived the trip.

The barrel designed by Stephens for the trip was six feet three inches high. It had strap arrangements inside and an electric light system. An oxygen tank was carried, which, Stephens said, would keep him alive for several hours if the barrel became caught in a back eddy under the falls.

Stephens is the third to attempt the barrel trip over the falls. Mrs. Annie Edson Taylor went over in October, 1900, in an oak barrel, and Bobby Leach made the trip in July, 1911, in a steel barrel. Both are still living.

TABLETS IN WASHINGTON MONUMENT

Few of the thousands of visitors to the Washington Monument have the disposition to climb its nine hundred steps. It is much easier to ride on the elevator, which makes the ascent of the tall column in about eight minutes. But visitors who walk one way, either up or down, are well rewarded by a near view of the inscriptions on the memorial tablets.

The Association of Journeymen Stone Cutters of Philadelphia, under the emblems of their trade, inscribed on their tablet, "United We Stand." Westmoreland county, Virginia, describes itself simply as "The Birthplace of Washington." Greece, the "Mother of Ancient Liberty," sends from the Parthenon "This Ancient Stone as a Testimony of Honor and Admiration."

The Turkish inscription, it is said, was written by the court poet, and bears a date in a "year of the Hegira." One of the longest inscriptions appears on a stone presented by some Chinese Christians of Che Heang, China, in 1853. It declares George Washington to have been braver than Tsau-Tsau or Lin-Pi.

A likeness of Shakespeare stands out on a stone at the twenty-sixth landing, as the short level spaces between the flights of stairs are called, bearing these words above: "All That Live Must Die," and below: "A Tribute of Respect From the Ladies and Gentlemen of the Dramatic Profession of America."

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ITEMS OF INTEREST

SUGAR SOLD FOR FIVE CENTS A POUND.

Sugar sold for five cents a pound, eggs for five cents a dozen, butter for eight cents a pound, corn for seven cents a bushel, and whisky for 18 cents a gallon in this part of Wisconsin in the late forties, according to Lemach Graham, pioneer resident of Springville, Vernon County.

Graham was the first man to live on a homestead in Vernon County, settling at Springville in 1846, with his parents. He is the father of 15 children. Mrs. Graham died in 118. At the age of 92, Graham is still active and recalls in interesting style the early history of Bad Axe County, now Vernon County.

CAPTURED GOLDEN EAGLE

A full-grown golden eagle was captured in Rosshire, Scotland, recently, under peculiar circumstances. Three surfacemen were employed at a section of a new portion of the Highland line when they were attracted by the appearance of an eagle in a field three miles from Ardgay. On being approached the bird offered a fierce resistance with beak and talons. The men threw their jackets over it, one holding its head enveloped in the jacket, while the others tied its legs. The bird was secured alive without much injury. It is seven feet one inch from tip to tip of wings. Eagles, it is said, cannot rise from the ground owing to their immense spread of wings and comparatively short legs. They require pinnacles, boulders or steep precipices ere they can soar.

REMOVING STUBBORN NUT

While a stubborn stud or sheared bolt is difficult to remove, one can usually unscrew a nut without much trouble, even if it has become more or less rusted in place. A good method to take off a nut that seems to resist being parted from its stud is to apply a wrench that fits the nut and let it rest against the nut for a few minutes. The heat will sometimes expand the nut without producing corresponding expansion of the bolt and it may be unscrewed. Then spanner or end wrench may be heated in a blow lamp flame, and while this kink is very old it is not generally known. One should not heat a hardened wrench or an

adjustable member as it may be rendered unfit for use. The blow lamp flame should not be applied to the nut direct because the bolt will be heated and will expand as well as the nut. Kerosene may be poured around the threads with good results, especially if the nut has rusted in place. Several alternate heatings and applications of kerosene oil may be needed before the nut is loosened and if it still resists, a light tapping with a hammer on all the facets while it is hot may assist in having it become looser on the threads.

LAUGHS

"Is this the Union Dime Savings Bank?" "Yes."
"Well, I want to know if a nonunion man can deposit in your bank?"

Mr. Timid (hearing a noise at two a. m.)—
I th-think, dear, that there is a m-man in the house. Wife (scornfully)—Not in this room.

An Irishman aimed at a bird and hit a frog. Picking it up, he looked surprised, and said: "Well, anyhow, I knocked the feathers off it."

Bride (putting on traveling-dress—Did I look nervous during the ceremony, Kate? Kate (bride's eldest sister)—A little at first, but not after Alfred had said "Yes."

Teacher—If a bricklayer gets four dollars for working eight hours a day, what would he get if he worked ten hours a day? Bright Pupil—He'd get a call-down from the union.

"Can you gimme a bite, ma'am?" said the ragged hobo. "I'm hungry enuff ter eat a hoss." "I regret to say," replied the kind lady, "that we are just out of horses, but I'll call the dog."

Burglar Bill—Got any children? Slippery Sam (moodily)—I had a son onct. I trained him up to snatch pocketbooks from ladies out shopping. Burglar Bill—Wot became of 'im? Slippery Sam—He starved ter death.

Buyer—I want to buy a dog. I don't know what they call the breed, but it is something the shape of a greyhound, with a short, curly tail and rough hair. Do you keep dogs like that? Fancier—No, I drown 'em!

"There is a new song I want," remarked the customer, "but I can't think of its name—something about a riot and fight in Sing Sing or some such place." "I guess this must be it," ventured the new clerk, as he handed forth a copy of "The Village Church Choir."

"Jimmy," said the teacher, "what is the shape of the earth?" "I dunno, teacher." "Well, what is the shape of the cuff-buttons your father wears to church on Sundays?" "Dey are square, teacher." "How about the ones he wears on week days?" "Dey are round, teacher." "Well, then, what is the shape of the earth?" "Square on Sundays and round on week days."

A FEW GOOD ITEMS

WHAT A FROG CAN DO

A frog weighing a pound can make his voice heard on a still night a distance of a mile. If a man weighing 150 pounds could do as well in proportion there would hardly be any need of telephones. He could converse in an ordinary tone with a person fifty miles away. Naturalists are not agreed as to why the bullfrog will sit on a log at night and send his bellow far around, but it is quite likely that he loves the sound of it himself. There is no other reason for the owl to hoot except to hear how it sounds. In the bayous and swamps of the South they have caught bullfrogs weighing five pounds, and their bellowing was like that of a steamer.

A STRANGE BIRD

A final attempt is being made by the New Zealand Government to obtain specimens of the huia, a bird which has been practically exterminated by the vogue for its feathers, which obtains among the Maoris. The huia is a jet black bird with a white band at the extreme end of its tail feathers. The birds are hatched in pairs. The male has a short, strong beak and the female a long, slender, incurved beak; the male breaks the bark off dead trees and the female dips her beak into the holes of the big grubs which attack dead timber. She presents one grub to her spouse and then has one herself, alternating most conscientiously. Maoris say that when one dies the other must necessarily die of starvation because nature has so arranged that each is dependent on the other.

RICH OSAGE INDIANS SQUANDER THEIR \$10,000 A YEAR

Because each adult Osage Indian in Oklahoma gets between \$9,000 and \$10,000 income a year from his share in oil lands, Uncle Sam is facing the prospect that they will become public charges in a comparatively short time.

This latest Indian problem has been discovered by members of a sub-committee of the House Indian Affairs Committee, the members of which have just returned from a visit to the Indian reservations. They say they found many problems the next Congress must work out, but that the problem of the wealthy Osages is the most difficult.

"Many of these Indian tribes," declared Representative Rhodes (Rep., Mo.), a member of the sub-committee, "have shown marked progress in education and in their home activities, but in the majority of cases the Indian is slow to respond to civilization. I fear the Indian problem will be with us many years."

"The most remarkable situation is that of the Osages in Oklahoma. As a tribe they are the richest per capita people in the world. Last year their per capita income was \$8,000. A family of four, therefore, got \$32,000. In 1929 the per capita income will be between \$9,000 and \$10,000. This money comes from oil and gas leases.

"It was no uncommon thing to find a family

in which there are half a dozen adult members in which each member owned from one to three automobiles, and Super-Sixes at that. They are throwing their money away. In 1931 the trust period in which these lands are held for the Indians will have expired, and then, unless the Government begins soon to withhold some of the Indians, 75 per cent. of the Osages will be charges upon the State of Oklahoma."

Mr. Rhodes is in favor of the Government withholding half the money from this time forward for the benefit of the Indians and in order that the State of Oklahoma will not have to assume responsibility for them. "White traders," Mr. Rhodes added, "are very much against this recommendation. They are prospering in and near the Indian reservation."

"We found the Indian warehouses practically empty. There is no justification for their further maintenance. I am in favor of abolishing them. In every case we found the Government-owned tribal herd for the Indians has not been a success, and the big irrigation projects have not yet demonstrated that the Government was justified in instituting them at the expense of the Indians. The Indians do not use them."

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GOOD READING

TAME YOUR DOLLARS—BAG 'EM.

In spite of many academic discussions, nobody really cares what makes the wild cat wild because the wild cat is no good even when he is tame. But it makes all the difference in the world whether useful livestock is trained or wild. The finest colt in the world, product of the best draft stock, is of little use to a farmer unless he has been broken to harness, is bridle wise and tractable.

A cow may be a champion milk producer but she is of comparatively little value if nobody can milk her. A setter may carry the blue blood of Count Gladstone and have a nose for birds that are unequalled, but nobody wants to hunt behind him unless he has felt the jerk of the trainer's choke line and learned not only to find birds but to give his owner an opportunity to bag them.

It is exactly the same way with dollars. The country to-day is overrun with wild dollars. They are as numerous as the herds of wild horses and buffalo that used to roam the plains of the west and just about as useful. If you capture them, all you can do with them is lock them up in a cage to keep them from getting out, destroying your financial fences and trampling your garden plots. You cannot even handle them without their getting away or doing you some harm.

But if you tame them and train them by continued and patient and regular investment in safe securities such as Government Savings Stamps, Treasury Savings Certificates or Liberty Bonds at present advantageous market prices you can make them work for you faithfully and well. Investment is the only known method of subduing wild dollars, but it must be safe investment. Like every other animal trainer you must have patience and the lesson must be repeated until it is thoroughly learned.

GET A START NOW

Two old-time Irish groundkeepers were spading up the broad jump pit at Georgetown University Athletic Field recently after the track squad had finished workouts for the day. They had been discussing the style of the old time broad jumpers who had stuck their spikes in the Georgetown take off and had compared the methods and records of Alvin Krantzlein, Meyer Pirstein, Eddie Bloss and others of the early part of the century.

"Sure 'tis only the lads from the Aul Sod that do be the leppers," finally declared one of the groundkeepers. "Hasn't the 24 foot 11 and three-quarters jump of Paddy O'Connor made in Dublin in 1901 stood till now? But I knew of a lad named Killduff from County Limerick and O'Connor was nauthin' to him. Killduff went out huntin' in the wilds of Afriky and ran into a bunch of wild cannaybals who made for him. He dropped his gun and started to run and run he did for ten miles with the cannaybals gaining at every step. Unbeknownst he ran straight up to a river one hundred feet wide. Without stoppin' he took a mighty leap and landed on the other side. How's that for a jump, Dan?"

"He must have been a fair jumper," answered Dan. But think of the start he had."

In this day of economic disturbance and inflated prices, every American must "get a start" if he is to get across the obstacles that separate him from financial freedom, safety and success. If they are not able to make the jump the cannibals of misfortune, illness, old age or disaster will leave nothing but their bare bones. Krantzlein had a double kick in the air which landed him feet and inches beyond his competitors but he couldn't use it unless he hit the takeoff fast. Every young fellow in America can get the start and the speed that will carry him over his jumps by systematic saving and safe investment in government securities, Government Savings Stamps, Treasury Savings Certificates and Liberty Bonds at present market prices. They do not require a ten mile run, either.

CHURCH RUNS A GARAGE

One church has solved part of its financial problems by using the unoccupied part of its lot as a garage. On Sundays the church parking space is filled with cars driven by members of its congregation and of a church near by. The charge of each car is small, but it assures the owner that a trustworthy person will keep his eye on it, so robes and other things may be left in it safely. And as a means of income to the church the addition of these small sums makes a tidy amount.

It is a long time since each church had a shed back of it, as a matter of course, for the hitching of the horse that drew the family surrey or phaeton. Many churches are so built as to have no extra space for this purpose. But it is quite a common thing nowadays for a church to buy a building lot suitable for the large church of the future, and to erect for present purposes a small building which may later be moved to the rear and serve for Sunday school, community rooms and offices. This leaves a large yard, much of which might very well be set aside for the parking of vehicles during service hours.

A church anywhere near the center of community life would undoubtedly find its "garage" a paying business during the week as well as on Sunday. In all but the smallest of rural villages parking space is difficult to find whenever there is anything to draw people to town. Shoppers, business men, farmers, would be glad to avail themselves of the privilege. One person in charge to check the cars and see that unauthorized persons had no access to them would suffice to run it.

The church bazaar, the church benefit of any sort, is always a bad means of support. The labor used in getting it up far offsets the money raised. Such methods as this of the garage, utilizing the church's resources in a businesslike manner to bring in a definite, businesslike income, will do much to make the church respected by people who now have no patience with its oftentimes futile financing.

SNAKE CHARMING SECRETS.

The secret of snake - charming are much simpler than most people imagine. The snakes to be handled are gorged with food so that they become drowsy, or else they are drugged so that their senses are dazed. Sometimes they are kept in ice boxes, and the cold puts them in a semitorpid condition. In either case the snakes are only half alive. In handling the reptile, the hand must always grasp it at certain places where the head can be guided and held from the body. This is the hardest thing to learn, but, like everything else, it comes with practise. By dint of dexterity and strength, the snake is easily passed from one hand to the other, and is allowed to coil about the body. The snake charmer, however, must always be on the alert. When the snake becomes too lively, it is put back in the ice box. In handling a reptile with the fangs in in one requires great strength, as the strain on the system during the performance is very considerable. The grasp and movements must be very precise and accurate. There is no room for hesitancy or uncertainty. Most of the snakes handled, however, are harmless.



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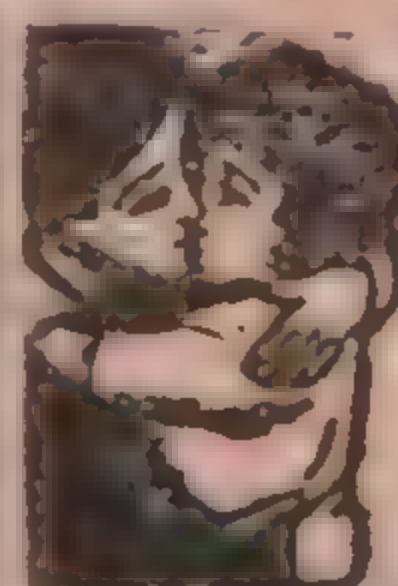
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RAILWAY TRAFFIC INSPECTORS earn from \$14 to \$200 per month and expenses. Travel if desired. Unlimited advancement. No age limit. We train you. Positions furnished under guarantee. Write for Booklet CM 101, Standard Business Training Institute, Buffalo, N. Y.

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IF YOU WISH a pretty and wealthy wife, write me enclosing a stamped envelope and I will answer. Lillian Sprout, Station H, Cleveland, O.

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MARRY. Thousands of people, all ages, worth \$5,000 to \$400,000; anxious for marriage; write for my list, free. Ralph Hyde, B2 Minna St., San Francisco, Calif.

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MARRY—MARRIAGE DIRECTORY with photos and descriptions free. Pay when married. The Exchange, Dept. 545, Kansas City, Mo.

SCIENTIFIC

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ASTROLOGICAL READING given with Key to Health, 10 cts. birthdate, worth \$1. Joseph L. Devere, 123 West Madison Street, Chicago.

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SUBTERRANEAN BED OF POTASH.

The potash industry of Nebraska may be revolutionized as a result of the accidental discovery through the sinking of a well for domestic purposes some distance from one of the brine lakes, that the water therein contained a larger percentage of potash than the lakes themselves. This tends to sustain the theory some of the producers have held that the impregnated lake water comes through underground sources from some great bed of potash.

Work will be begun immediately to trace the flow of brine from a source outside the lake. This will be done by experimental wells costing but a small sum. If potash exists in beds instead of being confined to lakes where ashes from ancient forest fires have been leached and carried by surface water flow, as hitherto held, it will mean a big thing for the industry, the principal expense of which now is in the evaporation of the brine by the application of heat.

The resultant solids contain 18 to 38 per. cent. potash.

A combined electric and sand bath for treating certain ills is the idea of a New York inventor.

AN OLD FIRE

Down in the Spavnaug Hills, near the little hamlet of Murphy, Olka., there burns an Indian camp fire that has not been quenched for fifty years. It is the watch fire of the Cherokees, a fire that is kept burning as a memento to the Great Spirit that the Indians remember his goodness to them and that their hearts are true.

No one knows when the fire was kindled, not even Chief Charlie Tee Hee, but B. F. Abernathy, a white man who lives in Murphy, says it was burning thirty-three years ago when he took up his residence there. It does not always show signs of life, but down in the cone of ashes that has accumulated until it is three feet high, are embers that are kept alive by introduction of a gum that is taken from a tree. Many of the Indians believe the fire cannot die on account of it being a symbol of a covenant between God and man.

On special occasions, such as stomp dances, one of which is going on now, the fire is allowed to become a good-sized camp fire and then the braves sit around it and smoke a peculiar pipe, an act that renews the individual covenant of each.

Free Book on Drink Habit

A well-known New Yorker, addicted to drink habit for 16 years, found it was putting him in the human scrap-heap. Now he is completely free from the habit and tells about a quick and lasting remedy in a book that he has published.

This book contains information of vital interest to drinkers, their wives and others who have tried in vain to conquer the habit by persuasion, pledges or medicines. The author, Edward J. Woods, DC-601, Station F, New York City, will send it free, in plain wrapper, postpaid.

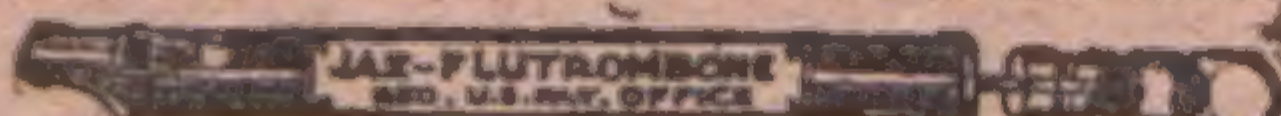
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Others—men and women—have reported remarkable hair growth by the same method. Whoever wishes the recipe may obtain it free by writing to John Hart Brittain, BF-103 Station F, New York, N. Y. Or the recipe with a testing box of the preparation, postpaid, for 10 cents, stamps or silver. This is a genuine offer and will prove to be just what you have been seeking. Show others this advertisement.



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Tells: How to Court a Bashful Girl. How to Woo an Heiress. How a Lady Should Manage Her Beau to make him Propose Marriage. How to Catch a Rich Bachelor. How to Win the Favors of Ladies. Wedding Suggestions, etc., etc. All subjects helpful to lovers. 25¢ POSTPAID

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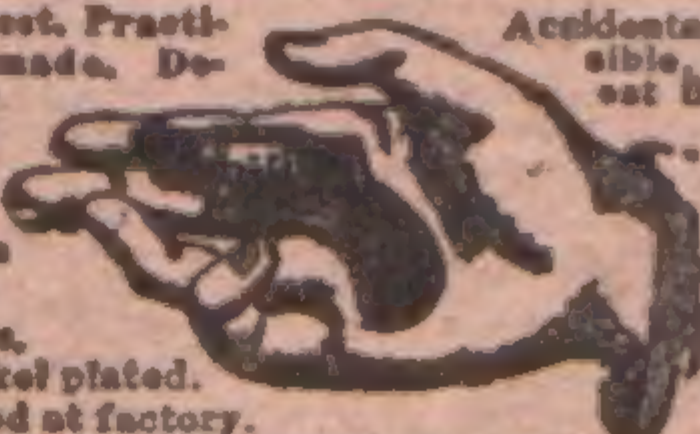


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12 Games; 30 Verses for Autograph Albums. All the above by mail for 10 cts. and 3 cts. postage. ROYAL SALES CO., Box 30, South Norwalk, Conn.

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Sore or open legs, ulcers, enlarged veins, eczema healed while you work. Write for free book and describe your own case.

A. C. Llopo, 1457 Green Bay Av., Milwaukee, WI

BREEDING FROGS.

William Waddington is the possessor of six large tracts of land in the Illinois bottoms on the Mississippi River, a little south of St. Louis, and has dealt extensively in the frog business. Much of those bottom lands are marshy and swampy and unfitted for agricultural purposes.

Many years ago Mr. Waddington conceived the idea of "frog farming," and after cleaning up the swamp lands with the improved scrapers and inclosing several hundred acres with a strong wire fence and otherwise beautifying the grounds surrounding these marshy places, he soon became the possessor of a huge frog farm.

Convinced that he had the grounds and the fresh spring water, he was determined to experiment in the breeding, raising and selling of the delicious amphibious animal. He made a trip to Paris and there investigated the propagating and handling of this palatable luxury. He made arrangements to have shipped to him twenty-five French bulls and seventy-five female frogs, which landed in good order and condition at St. Louis. From there they were conveyed to his frogery in the Illinois bottoms and turned loose to roam over the placid waters that sparkled far and wide.

In less than a year the foreign stock had completely driven the native breed from the swamps, and he was shipping the "French" article to St. Louis and Chicago. He had a contract with several packing and slaughtering houses for the offal, which was hauled to the different froggeries. Stale bread and broken crackers were also used in feeding besides the innumerable insects and water wiggins that abound in such damp and marshy districts. It was a sight to see thousands of these frogs jumping to their accustomed places at feeding time. They were fed twice a day. When the first came into the market they sold as high as \$2 per dozen, but the price fluctuated according to the demand, and sometimes dropped as low as 50 cents, but would average \$1 per dozen through the season.

During the winter months they would disappear by burying themselves in the mud along the outer edge of the lake or swamp. It requires a French frog about three months to mature—that is to say, large enough to market, but they become full grown at the age of six months, while the American frog requires fully eight months, and then is not more than three-quarters the size of the French animal—the latter a most beautiful yellowish-green color, with golden spots all over his body.

FAME AND FORTUNE WEEKLY

— LATEST ISSUES —

- 751 Stockbroker Dick; or, The Boy Who Broke the Wall Street Market.
- 752 On the Job; or, Tom Taylor's Lucky Venture.
- 753 The Lucky Seven; or, The Boys Who Won the Money.
- 754 Will, the Waif; or, From Bootblack to Merchant.
- 755 Prince of the Curb; or, A College Boy in Wall Street.
- 756 Wrecked in the Gulf; or, The Gold of the Old Buccaneers.
- 757 The Rival Boy Brokers; or, Out for Every Deal in Sight.
- 758 Under the Big Tent; or, From Acrobat to Manager.
- 759 A Pair of Jacks; or, The Smartest Messengers in Wall Street.
- 760 Brave Billy Bland; or, Hustling Up a Business.
- 761 Taking a Big Risk; or, The Dime That Led To Riches.
- 762 Clear Grit; or, The Office Boy Who Made Good.
- 763 Dealing in Stocks; or, Saved by a Wall Street Ticker.
- 764 The Sailor's Secret; or, The Treasure of Dead Man's Rock.
- 765 Capturing the Coin; or, The Deals of a Boy Broker.
- 766 On His Own Hook; or, Making a Losing Business Pay.
- 767 Lucky Jim; or, \$100,000 From Stocks.
- 768 "Millions In It"; or, A Boy With Ideas.
- 769 The Mystery of a Mining Chart; and, The Wall Street Boy Who Solved It.
- 770 Grasping His Chance; or, The Boy Merchant of Melrose.
- 771 Winning By Pluck; or, The Deals That Made the Dollars.
- 772 The Crimson Mask; or, The Treasure of San Pedro.
- 773 Frank Fisk, the Boy Broker; or, Working the Wall Street Stock Market.
- 774 Playing a Lone Hand; or, The Boy Who Got the Gold.
- 775 Will Fox of Wall Street; or, The Success of a Boy Broker.

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